

# NEWSLETTER

## NCRHA CHRISTMAS PAST



Business Planning and Support Ag. Vernessar Cummings and GM Human Resources JoAnne Thomas (left) and Gm Nursing Roslyn Reneaud and a member of her nursing staff hand toys to these tiny patients.

## Paediatric Toy Drive

On December 21st, 2017, led by Chief Executive Officer, (CEO) Mr. Davlin Thomas members of the executive management team and staff gifted toys & presents to children on Paediatric wards & clinics. Many thanks to the generous members of staff who contributed to 2017's Toy Drive success! It could not have happened without you.

## MHWH Wins Parang

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After the cuatros were strummed, the "Ayees!" screeched and the shack shack shook, it was Mt. Hope Women's Hospital who emerged victorious at the first annual North Central Regional Health Authority parang competition.

The event was held at the roundabout at Head Office Building 39, Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex, and a total of six groups from the NCRHA competed for the challenge trophy.

Competitors were required to perform one traditional and one original composition, and staff who turned out to support their colleagues were treated to rousing performances from the participants, donned in festive attire, with comical props and delightful compositions.



First place winners MHWH staff, with Board member Yvonne Bullen-Smith and CEO Davlin Thomas.

And while los parranderos de Dental Hospital, Central Sterile Processing and Staff Development Unit added to the entertainment, it was St. Joseph Enhanced Health Centre who came in second and Engineering third.

Special thanks to the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service Band for musical accompaniment and supporting entertainment and MC's Laura and Kiel. (See pg. 3)

## EDITORIAL

### 2017 In Review

2017 was a year of change for the NCRHA; we made a conscious decision to become the beacon for a renewal of the health care sector in Trinidad and Tobago.

A lot happened in 2017, but over the last six months in particular, the Corporate Communications Department decided to actively engage you – our staff, patients and readers interested in improving the delivery of healthcare in our country.

Our image – particularly in the first part of the year wasn't what we would have liked, with a plethora of negative articles chastising health facilities of the North Central Regional Health Authority (NCRHA) and the wider local health sector, as the public felt we lacked empathy, facilities were falling apart and supplies were running low.

The truth however, was quite different, we were doing all in our power to take care of our patients. There was, and still are, people going beyond the call, looking constantly at our systems, looking for ways to improve and to devise new procedures.

Seeing the miracle of our staff saving lives everyday pushed us to tell the untold stories of our heroes in our hospitals and health centers. Saving lives one at a time may seem cliché, but the tremendous job performed by our teams working on our outreach projects such as Walk the Talk, InTouch, CALM and now our new Post Natal Home Care Unit have started to stitch up the loose ends in our organisational fabric, to ensure that all have a great opportunity to enjoy a future that is pain free and full of potential.

As we prodded on, the local media caught on; 40 percent of the news reported on the NCRHA were positive. The NCRHA therefore has been paving the path for the transformation of the health sector on the whole. We congratulate our staff for their involvement, support and teamwork which made the successes of these ventures attainable.

There is no intention to slow down on our part. If anything, we are determined to push harder towards the expansion of services in all departments within the Authority. And as we end our journey in 2017, we are determined to make 2018 So Much Better.

### OSH TIPS

All accidents/incidents must be recorded by the supervisor in a log book and the internal accident/incident completed.

A report of the incident is to be sent to the manager of the department or hospital.

The manager of the department or hospital should forward a copy of the report to the OSH officer.

## RELATIVES AND CAURA STAFF REMEMBER PATIENTS

Approximately one hundred and fifty relatives and friends of former patients of the Caura Hospital returned to the facility to remember their loved ones, and to honor the dedicated team of care givers at the hospital's Palliative Care Unit.

The unit hosted its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Memorial at the Caura Hospital, on November 16, 2017. The Palliative Care Unit, a service of the North Central Regional Health Authority (NCRHA) hosted the memorial on the scenic grounds of the Caura Hospital, in honor of patients who spent their final days at the facility over the last 18 months.

The first of its kind in Trinidad and Tobago, the Palliative Care

Unit, is a ward dedicated to the care of patients stricken with terminal diseases and are unable to care for themselves.

Chief Executive Officer, Davlin Thomas, delivered greetings on behalf of the Board of Directors and his Executive Management team. He reminisced on the primary stages of the development of the Palliative Care Unit and commended the staff who were instrumental in ensuring that the infrastructure was in place for the Unit. He also saluted the key supporters who championed the launch of the service.

In addition to remembering the expired, the program was structured to meet the needs of the grieving relatives.

The program was concluded with all the families of the deceased participating in a candle lighting ceremony.

Dr. Karen Cox, the head of the palliative Care Unit, reminded the families that support services are still available for those who may be having difficulty coping with losses of loved ones to terminal diseases.



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## NCRHA CUTS BACKLOG WITH SURGICAL SUNDAYS



The surgical and support team at the EWMSC show support for this patient after successfully completing his surgery.

**THE NCRHA** cut a major slice off its backlog of surgical cases after 50 patients received life changing operations at the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex (EWMSC).

The patients were part of the new initiative called Surgical Sundays, where surgeons make the most of the free operating theatres, every two weeks on Sundays, to clear up the backlog of surgeries.

The surgical team initially focused on hernias, but other types of procedures will be considered over time as we move to reduce the backlog of cases to more manageable levels," said Dr. Malachy Ojuro, Medical Chief of Staff (Ag), at the EWMSC.

He said the initiative resulted in 18 surgeries being conducted on 16 patients a month ago and another 15 patients benefitted two weeks later on Sunday November 25. All the procedures were successfully performed by the all-local

medical teams at the EWMSC! The procedures were completed using the model developed by the NCRHA in the recently concluded Operation Walk project in October, where more than 50 surgical procedures were performed in just three days, added Dr. Ojuro.

"The system worked well because we carefully screened the most appropriate medical cases

for this type of surgery, so they can return to their loved ones on the same day of the procedure. This allowed us to make the best use of the available beds and surgical resources at the hospital," he added.

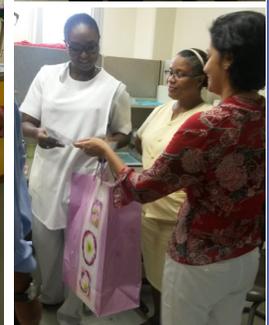
Health Minister, Terrence Deyalsingh said This project has positioned the NCRHA and the EWMSC as the leading centre for specialized medical solutions in Trinidad and Tobago.

Davlin Thomas, Chief Executive Officer at the NCRHA" said the NCRHA was pleased to host this new initiative as recent improvements in the systems and procedures have reduced congestion at the hospitals, thus freeing up the operating theatres and medical personnel to address the backlog for many surgical procedures. Surgical Sundays is the latest component of the NCRHA's larger strategy to cement the EWMSC's position as the premier healthcare facility in Trinidad and Tobago, NCRHA Chairman Steve De Las said.

## Dept. of Medicine Shows Appreciation



Over the past few years, for Christmas, the Department of Medicine has shown appreciation to the various wards and units under its purview with a ceremony presentation of awards and hampers made possible through the generous contributions from the Department of Medicine's Consultants. No doubt this small gesture adds toward the overall morale and comradery of staff.



## More Parang

**Left:** Second place winners St. Joseph Enhanced Centre staff with Board member Yvonne Bullen-Smith and CEO Davlin Thomas.

**Right:** Third place winners Engineering staff members.



## Upcoming Events & Observances

### JANUARY

- 28th World Leprosy Day

### FEBRUARY

- 4th World Cancer Day
- 15th International Childhood Cancer Day

## Post Natal Home Care Unit ...home care for high risk moms

The Mt Hope Women's Hospital (MWH) now provides an off-site service for women with high risk pregnancies or complex deliveries, where a team of midwives and doctors follow-up with home visits to reduce the adverse health risks for new moms and their babies.

The team from the newly formed Post Natal Home Care Unit (PNHCU) at the MWH, visit these high risk patients at home, tracking their recovery from delivery .

The service which was launched last October, accommodates patients who had pregnancy issues such as pregnancy induced hypertension, diabetes, preeclampsia and associated complex deliveries like caesarean sections. Follow-ups are also done on patients who had vaginal deliveries with lacerations from episiotomies (surgical cuts in the vaginal area) and babies who have been in the Neo Natal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

"The plan is to visit homes to assess and deliver whatever services are required for each case. The mother and the new baby are screened.

"The follow-up is important for these high risk mothers as we have already experienced cases where we have had to refer patients back to the hospital or rush them to the emergency room ourselves if their health is

facing an immediate risk" said Claudette Fraser Udika, Nursing Administrator at the MWH.

The idea of the PNHCU was first proposed when members of the nursing staff at the Mt. Hope Women's Hospital noticed that there was a gap in the delivery of care for post-delivery patients accessing medical care. They found that the only way for a new mother was to



Caura Hospital Manager Liza Bethelmy; Claudette Fraser Udika, Nursing Administrator MWH; Radica Maharaj Lutchman, Manager Nursing Services EWMSC; Cheryl Williams, Maternity Nursing Assistant and Geralddeen Hunte, BFHI Coordinator at the launch of the PNHCU.

return to the hospital.

"This is often difficult for patients who live on the periphery of the region and may not have the resources to make the trip to the hospital," added Udika.

NCRHA Chairman Steve De Las said "the Authority is determined to ensure that care continues after an at-risk mother leaves the hospital.

Health Minister Terrence Deyalsingh said his

Ministry will continue to support the NCRHA with their unique programs that place focus on early intervention and monitoring.

NCRHA's Chief Executive Officer, Davlin Thomas said the NCRHA "will continue to engage in meaningful activities to position our organization as a first class provider of health care services in the public or private sector.

"The PNHCU is also part of a drive by the

NCRHA to bring down infant mortality in line with the targets set by the Ministry of Health. It is also consistent with our plan to improve the quality of care we are delivering to women within the North Central Region," added Thomas.

He paid tribute to the medical staff and midwives at the MWH and PNHCU who have been making a tremendous contribution to the welfare and care of their patients.

## NCRHA and CHC Partner



Five-year-old Talya Walker , was one of 31 children who had cardiac procedures at the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex (EWMSC) Paediatric Unit, within the last five months, after the North Central Regional Health Authority (NCRHA) reengaged the private/public partnership with Caribbean Heart Care (CHC) last August.

In just three surgical runs, the NCRHA's surgical team with CHC completed 33 per cent more surgeries than the annual average for the past ten years.

Photo. Talya, held by her father David Walker seated next to her mother Trycia Mendoza-Walker. Behind them, (from left) Dr. Gyandeo Maharaj, Health Minister Terrence Deyalsingh, NCRHA Senior Nurse, Chairman Steve De Las and CEO Davlin Thomas.