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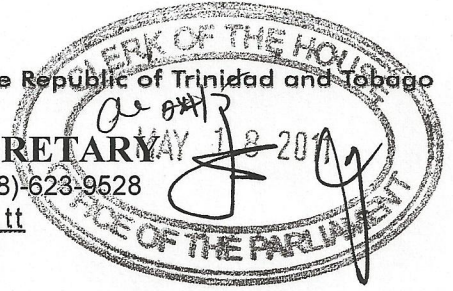
MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

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May 16, 2011

Ms. Jacqui Sampson Meiguel
Clerk of the House
Office of the Parliament
The Red House
Abercromby Street
Port of Spain

Dear Ms. Sampson Meiguel

**Re: First Report of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament on Ministries (Group 1),
and on the Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises on the Ministry of Health
and its management of vector-borne diseases**

My correspondence to you dated April 01, 2011 refers.

We thank you for the recommendations contained in the First Report of the Joint Select Committee on Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group 1) on the Ministry of Health and its management of vector-borne diseases and attach our response.

An electronic copy will also be forwarded.

Respectfully

Mr. Waltrude Diaz
Permanent Secretary (Ag.)



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

First Report of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament on The Ministry of Health and its management of vector-borne diseases

May 16, 2011

www.health.gov.tt

63, Park Street, Port of Spain, Trinidad. T: (868) 627-0010/12/14

Recommendation 1:

As a matter of priority, the Ministry should develop a strategy that can sustain its public education campaign throughout the year, not just around the peak dengue period. A permanent change in societal behaviour can only be effected by lengthy periods of education and sensitization of the public about the deadly effects of dengue and preventative methods that can be utilized.

Response

The Ministry of Health agrees with Recommendation 1 and will adjust our strategy of public education to reflect the year long strategy and would do the necessary interventions to produce the societal change over the ensuing years. This will be monitored by surveys and other pre set targets.

Recommendation 2

The Ministry must commit to spearheading the collaborative efforts between itself and other relevant players (e.g. the Ministry of Local Government, EMA, CEPEP) to ensure continuous activities within communities. The establishment of weekly or monthly operational targets can assist in achieving this.

Response

We recognize that through the optimization of Inter-Sectoral collaboration the department will be one step closer towards achieving its goals.

At present we partner with a number of agencies (external and internal stakeholders with respect to the Ministry of Health); some of these include:

- Regional Corporations
- City Corporations
- Borough Corporations
- Ministry of Local government
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Works and Transport
- Environmental Management Agency
- Water and Sewerage Authority
- Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management
- Office of Metrologic Services
- Non-Governmental Agencies
- Community Groups
- The Media
- Pan American Health Organization/World Health organization
- County Medical Officers of Health
- Regional Health Authorities

- Other vertical services (MOH) e.g. Trinidad Public Health Laboratory

These partnerships are at times quite successful for e.g. through monthly health committee meetings with the Regional Corporations.

The Ministry of Health is committed to building sustainable, formal partnerships with these entities so as to achieve the departmental and national goals.

Response

We recognize that through the optimization of inter-Sectoral collaboration the department will be one step closer towards achieving its goals.

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- The Media
- Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization
- County Medical Officers of Health
- Regional Health Authorities

Recommendation 3

The Ministry should transpose to Trinidad, the Water Barrel Replacement Programme that has been implemented in Tobago for the last five years, to address the vector-breeding conditions which exist in areas with no pipe-borne water supply.

Response

The Ministry of Health has taken the initiative to liaise with the Ministry of the People to finalize a strategy to allow for a Water Barrel Replacement Programme.

We will evaluate the Tobago model to see the appropriateness of that model and the effectiveness of implementation of same in Trinidad.

Recommendation 4

A programme similar to the Inspector D.E.T. project should be designed and implemented at the level of secondary schools.

Response

The Ministry of Health will be evaluating the following approach:

A secondary school health education programme to be created within the following framework:

- The performance of baseline **KAP** (Knowledge, Attitude and Practice) studies targeting form four (4) students of the country to ascertain present trends.
- Establishment of an **annual national 'school quiz'** featuring (dengue fever) in partnership with other stakeholders (e.g. EMA) towards achieving integrated vector management.
- The utilization of **Theater in Health Education (TIHE)** within schools to create and sustain an environment of learning through this new and promising medium. This can be achieved through the production of plays, wherein issues pertaining to dengue will be presented as the central theme.
- Dengue is very much a global and regional public health issue of importance, with an estimated 50 million dengue infections annually and 2.5 billion persons residing in endemic countries (WHO 2008). As such, the IVCD would like to recommend the **re-engineering of the curriculum** of the Caribbean Examination Council (Ordinary Level examinations) so as to include dengue fever as an essential component of the **Biology/ Human and Social Biology curriculums**. In so doing, the disease will become integrated into the knowledge base of the future population of these countries with the intent to create short term and long term improvements in KAP with respect to dengue.

Recommendation 5

Efforts should be made to strengthen both the Inter-Ministerial and Inter-Sectoral Dengue Committees to ensure that the persons who comprise these Committees have the authority to effect decisions taken.

Response

The Ministry of Health would be strengthening both the Inter-Ministerial and Inter-Sectoral Dengue Committees by seeking Cabinet approval.

Recommendation 6

Further research should be undertaken by the Ministry of Health, in conjunction with the Ministry of Local Government, to identify the options available in finding a solution to the health risks presented by vacant and abandoned private lots within municipalities.

Response

Through the Inter-Sectoral Committee, the Ministry of Health, will explore solutions to this problem (**vacant and abandoned lots**).

In addition the Committee will also look into solutions to another critical issue - that of '**locked gates**'. When perifocal operators are prevented from entering residential premises, essential work is omitted in these communities.

Some suggested measures to resolve the former problem include:

- Levying greater fines for owners found to be in violation of public health ordinances
- Improved enforcement of legislature
- Increased Inter-Sectoral collaboration with respect to this matter
- New legislature to ensure that the land owner provides a public health certificate of property inspection as a pre-requisite to the payment of annual land and building taxes