



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

**The Cabinet Office**

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**Department of Communication and Information**

**Press Statement**

**by the**

**Honourable Nelson B.A. Bascome JP, MP**

**Minister of Health**

**Regarding the**

**Bermuda Health Council**

**on Monday 28 January 2008**

**at 2:30 p.m.**

Good afternoon,

The Bermuda Health Council Act 2004 created a Health Council with a mandate to regulate, coordinate and enhance the delivery of health services in Bermuda.

Ultimately, the Council's role is to advise me as Minister of Health on matters related to health services in Bermuda.

If you saw the official gazette last week, you would have noticed that I have made several changes to the membership of the Health Council.

I have invited you here today to introduce the new Chairperson of the Bermuda Health Council and to share the make-up of the Council that will serve this community over the next year.

Before I discuss those changes, I would like to publicly thank Dr. Michael Bradshaw, the first Chairman of the Bermuda Health Council, for all of his efforts to ensure the establishment of a Health Council in this country. It was under his watch that the Health Council evolved from being a piece of legislation in the House of Assembly into a living breathing entity.

I would also like to thank each and every member of the Health Council who has served from its inception up until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007. They gave a great deal of their time and without their sacrifice and commitment we would not be able to take these next steps in the evolution of the Health Council.

My thanks go to Lucille Parker-Swan who served as Deputy-Chair and all of the other members including Dr. Femi Bada, Dr. Steven Trott, Dr. Jewel Landy, Dr. June Hill, Mr. Mark Selley, Ms. Linda Merritt, Ms. Antoinette Bolden, Ms. Sharol Simmons and Ms. Jane Barnes – who will always be remembered as the first members of the Bermuda Health Council.

The Bermuda Health Council must be the platform from which health policy is developed in Bermuda. The Council must have a finger on the pulse of healthcare and bring together all the stakeholders in order to ensure that the Government is provided with the best possible advice regarding the health issues that face this country.

Therefore, the membership of the Health Council must represent the stakeholders of health care in Bermuda. Each should be at the table providing their expertise, their agendas, their concerns and working together for the benefit of this community.

It is the stakeholders who know exactly what the issues are that need to be addressed. They should be able to bring those issues, prioritize them and then recommend to me proposals that might lead to the overall coordination and integration of our healthcare system.

Their proposals should also lead to a more cost effective system and most importantly, impact in a positive way the lives of the average man and woman in Bermuda

To achieve these goals is this reason that I have amended the membership of the Bermuda Health Council.

The membership of the 2008 Health Council will see Ms. Linda Merritt reappointed to the Council in the role as Chairperson. I welcome her to this challenging position.

It will be Ms. Merritt who I expect to provide leadership and coordination to the diverse membership that will make up the Bermuda Health Council.

It will not be an easy task but what I know of Ms. Merritt, I believe she is well suited to provide the direction and serve as the conduit between the Ministry of Health and the members of the Health Council.

Mrs. Lucille Parker-Swan will also return as the Deputy Chairperson whilst Mr. Mark Selley will continue to represent the general community on the Council.

The new look Health Council will also include membership representing the Bermuda Hospitals Board, Physicians, Allied Health Professionals, Pharmacists, Optometrists, Dentists, Health Insurers and Nurses.

I believe that this is the right mix and creates the framework for a very dynamic Council. This is a group that will grapple with the health issues that face our community and by battling through those issues focus attention and bring about positive change to those critical areas of our healthcare system.

I am looking forward to the year ahead. I am expecting the Bermuda Health Council to show itself to be one of the most important bodies that this Government has ever created.