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Coordinate approach to health care needed

By Patricia Thangaraj

A coordinated approach to the provision of health care at both the primary and tertiary care levels and the need for an improved ambulance service that would help to transport patients with acute infarctions to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (Q.E.H.) are two of the things that must be provided in order for the health care system to address Acute Myocardial Infarctions.

These were just two of the recommendations that

came out of a series of workshops that was held over the past few weeks where physicians discussed best practices for the diagnosis and documentation of this condition, said Trevor Hassell, Chairman of the National Commission for Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases (NCCNCD).

Other recommendations that came out of these workshops was "the need to have reagents for testing for Troponins readily available at the QEH and the need for courses in electrocardiogram (ECG)

interpretation to be conducted at the QEH."

Speaking at the one day meeting to discuss the application of the Integrated Chronic Care Model to chronic non communicable diseases (CNCD) Management in Barbados at the Amaryllis Beach Resort yesterday, he said that there "is a need for a paradigm shift in the management of chronic diseases, at the level of the patient, physician, health care settings, and the application of policies and standards."

He is therefore hoping

that yesterday's session would have stimulated discussions on the type of care that the doctor provides to his/her patient. "Perhaps on every occasion that a patient attends a doctor, the physician should, among other things, write an ideal weight attainment prescription, provide a physical activity prescription, advise on the dangers of exposure to tobacco smoke and make information available on the dangers of salt intake."

The NCCNCD will also be focussing on developing

and implementing a strategic approach in addressing CNCD, where they would be guided by the published National Chronic Diseases Strategic Plan for the years 2009-2012 that they developed. This plan identifies 5 key strategies. These are the "development of strategic management issues and approaches to guide the functioning of the Commission, use of epidemiological data, health information systems and research, application of measures to support re-

duction of risk factors, health promotion, and quality treatment and enhanced care."

They have also supported the belief that the most effective way to tackle CNCD is for all stakeholders to play their respective part by utilizing their skills and expertise with special emphasis on slowing down this epidemic through the improvement of one's life style; preventing the onset of these conditions where ever and whenever possible and improving treatment and care.

Health system falls short on chronic care

By Patricia Thangaraj

THE current health care system is not meeting the health requirements of patients with chronic conditions.

"We have come to the realization that there is a mismatch between the chronic care needs of the population and the acute care orientation of our entire health care system – public and private.

"Many of our older persons with multiple chronic conditions are receiving health care from a system that is designed to treat acute illnesses and injuries," said Dr. Joy St. John, Chief Medical Officer.

Speaking at the one-day meeting to discuss the application of the Integrated Chronic Care Model to chronic non-communicable diseases (CNCD) Management in Barbados at the Amaryllis Beach Resort yesterday, she said that she came to this conclusion due to the fact that the incidences of non-communicable diseases has increased to the extent that

it has now become a public health crisis. The four leading causes of death in the region are cancer, diabetes, stroke and heart disease and non-communicable diseases continue to account for about 51 per cent of deaths in the Caribbean.

She stated that this data reveals that there must be profound and transparent implications for planning and carrying out health care programmes that highlight the need to stop the quickly expanding incidences of chronic diseases that are leading to many needless and premature deaths.

Therefore, it is essential that stakeholders in health care management and administration address these shortcomings by developing and implementing appropriate programmes and policies that tackle CNCD.

"Our planning and implementation of health strategies therefore have to be fashioned towards identifying gaps and priorities to advance the integrated approach to Non-



From left: Trevor Hassell, Chairman of the National Commission for Chronic Non Communicable Diseases (NCCNCD) and Dr. Joy St. John, Chief Medical Officer in attendance at the one day meeting to discuss the application of the Integrated Chronic Care Model to chronic non-communicable diseases (CNCD) Management in Barbados at the Amaryllis Beach Resort on Tuesday.

Communicable Diseases. It is anticipated that this would be done by identifying and promoting implementation of effective policies for modifying or reducing lifestyle related diseases in our population."

This, along with the

partnerships with the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre (CAREC) and CARICOM will aid in developing an internationally approved standard

that would be applicable to the local situation.

This means that they would be looking to engage both the political and community sectors to turn health knowledge into political and public action, where cross sectional linkages, advocacy groups and

alliances coordinate to fill in the gaps in the health care services.

In order for this to succeed, each stakeholder must identify any deficiencies and provide appropriate solutions to these concerns, stated Dr. St. John.