

Sagicor Life Inc and Healthy Caribbean Coalition

Memorandum of Understanding

Signing Ceremony

Tuesday, 18th September 2012

Ms. Joanne De Freitas, Director of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition & Coordinator Caribbean Support Centre, UNI Americas.

Professor Trevor Hassell, President, Healthy Caribbean Coalition, Special Envoy for NCDs & Chairman NCD Commission, Barbados.

Dr Merle Lewis, PAHO/WHO Representative, Barbados and Eastern Caribbean Countries.

Mrs Deborah Chen, Director of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition, Executive Director of the Heart Foundation of Jamaica, President Elect of the InterAmerican Heart Foundation & Vice President of the World Heart Federation,

Representatives of Healthy Caribbean Coalition, representatives of Sagicor Life Inc, specially invited guests, members of the media; it is my pleasure to address you this afternoon on such an important occasion.

Five years ago the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community or CARICOM met at the Regional Summit on Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases or NCDs and determined that strategies for the reduction of the burden of NCDs were a priority which all regional governments should fully support. However, a task of this magnitude cannot be successfully accomplished by Governments alone and as such CARICOM has called upon all of its citizens including individuals, communities, non-governmental organisations and the private sector to support policies and programmes devised to combat the NCD epidemic.

The Memorandum of Understanding being signed today is a decisive step towards the prevention and control of NCDs. As an organisation committed to initiatives and developments which will improve life in the communities in which we operate, Sagicor fully supports the mission and objectives of Healthy Caribbean Coalition.

Statistics derived from our company data has revealed that within the last three years there has been an increase in the number of claims attributed to chronic diseases. Additionally, in Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean and Trinidad - approximately one-third of all claims paid are as a result of these diseases. Therefore, over the next three years, the much needed funding which we will grant to Healthy Caribbean Coalition will give rise to the type of contribution that is necessary if we are to make a difference in the quality of life of Caribbean citizens and meet targets outlined by the CARICOM Heads of Government.

While Healthy Caribbean Coalition focuses on communication and advocacy Sagicor Life Inc is also working with the Chronic Disease Research Centre of the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus to quantify the extent of the impact of NCDs, through a newly-established Health Economics teaching position. Education is one of the most effective ways to counteract the social and economic effects of NCDs. Each year, in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, an average of 77% of deaths occur as a result of NCDs. Through our partnerships with Healthy Caribbean Coalition and the UWI, it is our mission to engineer a reduction in the number of individuals affected by these diseases annually.

This afternoon I want to commend the Healthy Caribbean Coalition and all local, regional and international partners for the work done so far and your commitment to the work still to be done, in the fight against the chronic non-communicable disease epidemic. Thank you.