

Carissa F. Etienne, M.D.

Dr. Carissa F. Etienne is the new Assistant Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, which is the Secretariat of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). She oversees the organization's programs for Disease Prevention and Control, Family and Community Health, Sustainable Development and Environmental Health, and Technology and Health Services Delivery—PAHO's core programs for providing technical cooperation to its member countries.

Dr. Etienne is a native of Dominica, where she has had a long career in medicine and public health. She was trained as a general practitioner at the University of the West Indies and graduated with an MBBS in 1976. She also studied community health in developing countries at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, where she received the master's degree in 1982.

She began her career with Dominica's Ministry of Health as a medical officer at the Princess Margaret Hospital in 1977 and by the early 1980s was serving on an executive team in charge of planning and implementing an island-wide reorganization and decentralization of health services with emphasis on the primary health care approach.

In 1986 Dr. Etienne was appointed medical director at Princess Margaret Hospital and served in that capacity until 1989, when she was appointed director of primary health care services and named disaster coordinator for the Ministry of Health and its representative on the National Emergency Preparedness Organization.

During the 1990s, she held several key positions in the Ministry of Health, including chief medical officer, designated national epidemiologist, chairman of the National AIDS Committee and coordinator of the National AIDS Program. In the latter capacity she was the government's lead advisor on strategies for the prevention, control and management of HIV/AIDS, and was responsible for implementing programs in this area as well as mobilizing and managing funds from donor agencies.

Dr. Etienne has carried out a number of research projects on a variety of public health issues, including health services utilization, social participation and community programs, among others. She has served as a consultant to PAHO on studies of health conditions and services in several Caribbean countries. At the Caribbean level, she has participated in the development and evaluation of major initiatives in health, including inter alia, disaster preparedness, HIV/AIDS, health services organization, essential drugs, health promotion and Caribbean cooperation in health.

Dr. Etienne is a member of the Caribbean Public Health Association and the Dominica Medical Association and has been an associate professor at Ross University School of Medicine since 1996.

She enjoys reading and community service. Dr. Etienne is married and has three children.