



Press Release 1.

FOR DISTRIBUTION 18 MARCH 2011

Caribbean civil society organization launches a Caribbean health revolution media campaign.

The Healthy Caribbean Coalition, a network established to combat chronic diseases, today officially launched a media campaign to firstly sensitize people of the Region about diabetes, heart disease, stroke, cancer and chronic lung disease, and secondly, obtain their support for a United Nations High Level Meeting to be held 19-20 September 2011 on chronic diseases.

The Healthy Caribbean Coalition led campaign is supported by the Caribbean Broadcasting Union, Digicel, LIME, One Caribbean Media Network, PAHO/WHO and the Sagicor Group.

The campaign will consist of the production of public service advertisements about lifestyles and chronic diseases distributed on television, radio and newspapers throughout the Caribbean, and on websites and other social media networks of health nongovernmental organizations and civil society.

Cell phone users will be requested to send text messages of support for the World Leaders meeting with a target of one million. Daily Health Tip Alerts will be provided on request to cell phone users during the campaign.

The campaign will allow the people of the Region to share their personal stories about healthy living and chronic disease, exchange ideas to enhance lifestyles, and provide information about activities in their organization to combat chronic disease.

“The Caribbean is the Region of the Americas worst affected by the epidemic of chronic disease. The human and economic burden of these conditions is not sustainable and could undermine the development of these small, fragile countries” so says Hon. Tillman Thomas, Prime Minister of Grenada and Chairman of CARICOM.

Diabetes, heart disease, stroke, cancers and other chronic diseases account for more than half of all deaths and most illness in the Caribbean. It is estimated that approximately one fifth of the people of the Caribbean suffer with hypertension, that is high blood pressure, and an estimated 10 percent suffer from diabetes.

Dr Pauline Williams-Green, President of the Caribbean Association of Family Practitioners, and a member of the Executive Committee of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition sees this United Nations High Level Meeting “as a significant opportunity for World Leaders to truly make a difference as they meet to respond globally to the challenge posed by chronic diseases”. Dr Williams- Green went on to say that she is “hopeful that the text messages of support obtained in this Caribbean health revolution advocacy

campaign will support Caribbean Leaders at the meeting in their efforts to get best possible outcomes for the people of the Region”.

Professor Trevor Hassell, leader of the Coalition said “the people of the Caribbean are today starting a Caribbean health revolution in which they will avoid exposure to tobacco smoke, be more physically active, and eat healthy, which they will do in an enabling environment created as a result of global, regional and local strategies and enhanced funding and resources arising out of the UN Meeting of Caribbean and World Leaders”. The revolution will be energized by everyone “getting the message.”

The Executive Committee of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition is comprised of representatives of the Heart Foundation of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago Cancer Society, Caribbean Association of Family Practitioners, Boys and Girls Scouts of Suriname, Caribbean Association of Feminist Research and Action, Diabetes Association of Bahamas, UNI American Caribbean Support Centre, Council for Voluntary Social Services, Jamaica, the InterAmerican Heart Foundation, the Rotary Club and the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados.