



Government of Bermuda

Ministry of Health and Environment

**Ministerial Statement to the
House of Assembly
by the Minister of Health and Environment
The Honourable Trevor G. Moniz, JP, MP
On 21st March, 2014
The Lamb Foggo Urgent Care Centre**

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to provide the Members of this Honourable House and the people of Bermuda with an update on the plans for the Lamb Foggo Urgent Care Centre.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall, I'm sure, that at the end of last year the Government announced that the Lamb Foggo Urgent Care Centre would be closing, as it was not felt that it was financially viable. This announcement was met with, shall we say, some concern and discontent.

The Premier and the Government made it clear that they had heard the people especially the people at the East End of the island and we announced that the Urgent Care Centre would remain open for a period while we reviewed the decision and looked at options.

Mr. Speaker, during the intervening three months, the Ministry of Health and Environment, the Department of Health, and the Bermuda Hospitals Board have been doing just that exploring options.

The BHB was approached by three different groups which expressed an interest in taking over the use of the Urgent Care Centre building, but none of these approaches bore any fruit.

During this period, the Hospital has continued to operate the Urgent Care Centre as per normal. They provide services between the hours of 4pm and midnight during the week and from noon to midnight on the weekend. Honourable Members will recall that day time diagnostic services were discontinued quite some time ago.

Unfortunately, despite the publicity that was generated by the announcement that the Urgent Care Centre would be closing, utilization of the facility has not changed. In fact, in some months it has gone down. Typically, the UCC has seen an average of 14 people per shift, but this number has dropped to 10 to 12 visitors per shift, at times. This may be good news, **Mr. Speaker**, as hopefully it just means that fewer people were ill or injured during this period.

Ultimately, as I said earlier, we have continued to review all of the options for the Urgent Care Centre. We also took the opportunity to review the Hospital's plans for their move to the new acute care wing which will take place later this year. What we have decided is that we will not rush into any decision.

The BHB will continue to operate the Lamb Foggo Urgent Care Centre using the current model of providing evening and weekend service at least through March, 2015.

This will allow the Government, and the Board, to fully consider the options. It will also serve to take some of the pressure off of the Emergency Department at King Edward. Emergency will be moving from its current location to the new acute care wing in September, and having the UCC continue to provide services will reduce the amount of traffic in the new Emergency Department as well as providing additional capacity to the system.

We have also been exploring other ways of increasing the use of the building. Members will be aware that the Department of Health operates a series of Public Health Clinics at their small (and old) facility in St. George - just across the street from the Sylvia Richardson Care Facility. These include: maternal and child health clinics, dental clinics, and wellness clinics for seniors.

We have been reviewing the pros and cons of moving the Public Health Clinics from St. George to the Lamb Foggo building. While the Department of Health Clinics would not provide "Urgent Care" services, their regular clinics could operate in a facility that is newer and much more modern than their current location. The Lamb Foggo facility may also allow the Department to expand some of its offerings and to use the St. George facility for other purposes.

Mr. Speaker, this Government is not only seeking to continue the delivery of service that the residents of the East End have come to expect over the past five years, we are seeking to enhance the delivery of Emergency Services to the residents of BOTH the East and West End.

Yes, **Mr. Speaker**, the Ministry of Health & Environment has worked closely with the Ministry of National Security to explore the feasibility of deploying Ambulance Service out of the East End and West End Port Royal stations which are operated by the Bermuda Fire & Rescue Service.

The co-location of Bermuda Hospitals Board and Bermuda Fire Service Personnel at the satellite stations would shorten the response and transporting of medical emergencies to King Edward VII Memorial Hospital.

To summarize, **Mr. Speaker**, the Lamb Foggo Urgent Care Centre will continue to operate for at least the next year, and we may also take the opportunity to relocate the Public Health clinics.

During this period, we will closely monitor the use of the UCC, assess the combined utilization of the UCC and the Emergency Department and explore other opportunities to provide timely and effective emergency services in both the east end and the west end of the island.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker**.