



Government of Bermuda

Ministry of Health, Seniors and Environment

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT TO THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
BY THE MINISTER OF HEALTH, SENIORS AND ENVIRONMENT

The Honourable Jeanne J. Atherden, JP, MP

On 17th August 2015

Bermuda Health Council Annual Report

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members, I am pleased to Table the Bermuda Health Council's Annual Report 2014/15 for the fiscal year ending March 2015.

Mr. Speaker, Section 12 of the Bermuda Health Council Act 2004 requires that the Health Council submit a report of its operations, including accounts certified by the Auditor financial statements, to the legislature. The Health Council has been operational since 2006 and has tabled annual reports every year since.

Mr. Speaker, in May 2015 the Health Council submitted its draft financial statements to the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) for the fiscal year ending March 2015. The audit was completed in July 2015, and the Annual Report has been approved by the Auditor General and is now being submitted for tabling.

The Health Council's Annual Report 2014/15 represents all operational activity between 1st April 2014 and 31st March 2015, inclusive, **Mr. Speaker**. In this period the Council continued its close collaboration with stakeholders to ensure regulatory oversight of Bermuda's health system.

Mr. Speaker, the Health Council has achieved significant accomplishments for 2014/2015 including the following:

- a. **Employers' Compliance** - The Health Council has enforced employers' compliance with Health Insurance Act 1970 obligations. The Health Council investigated complaints representing over 4200 employees and as a result of enforcement efforts, over 60% of these employees regained active insurance coverage. Over \$80,000 was recovered in Standard Health Benefit premium owed to insurers including to the Bermuda Government's Consolidated Fund. In addition, there were three criminal convictions of employers prosecuted through the courts.

- b. **Standards of Practice** - In collaboration with the Bermuda Nursing Council and the Bermuda Dental Board, the Health Council coordinated development and roll out of Standards of Practice for Nurses and for Dental Practitioners to improve healthcare quality on island.

- c. **Diagnostic test ordering** - At the request of physicians, the Health Council monitored and provided peer-based feedback to physicians on diagnostic and laboratory order rates. This initiative is associated with preliminary year on year observations of a 4 percent reduction in imaging tests referred, and an 18 percent reduction in clinical labs referred across multiple specialties.

- d. **Home medical services** - the Health Council introduced the Home Medical Services benefit which reduced health system costs by approximately \$100,000 by encouraging the right care at the right time in the right setting.

- e. **Standard Premium Rate** - The Health Council facilitated the actuarial review of the standard premium rate and published the Actuarial Review Report 2014. New benefits were added to direct care to more appropriate cost-effective settings.

- f. **National Health Accounts** - This year the Health Council published the National Health Accounts Report 2014 to monitor health expenditure and its impact on Bermuda's economy and households, reporting increased spending on overseas care and health insurance administration.

- g. **Advice to the Ministry** - And finally Mr. Speaker, the Health Council provided advice and support on a range of policy, public health and economic issues to the Ministry of Health, Seniors and Environment; as well as maintaining an up to date web site.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said before in this Honourable House, we are committed to improving healthcare coverage and access and to using healthcare resources more efficiently. The Health Council has dedicated itself to this task with the assistance of many partners in the private and public sectors, and should be congratulated on their accomplishments this year.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker**.