



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH, SENIORS and ENVIRONMENT

THE HON. JEANNE J. ATHERDEN, JP, MP

A HEALTHCARE SUMMIT - IMPROVING THE SYSTEM THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

July 10TH, 2015

Mr. Speaker, our system of healthcare touches the lives of every citizen at virtually every stage of life. Quality care, access to that care and its affordability remain important issues for the community and there are significant competing interests that comprise the sectors responsible for various roles in the healthcare continuum.

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister responsible for Health, much of my time is spent considering the perspectives presented by these diverse groups. Our current system exists on a platform crafted in the 1970s and whilst numerous improvements have been made, this economy has tested the sustainability of that system and has required us to sharpen the focus of how we resolve the modern problems presented.

Mr. Speaker, some weeks ago I had the opportunity to meet with representatives of charities and advocacy groups who raised with me, on behalf of their members, how necessary increases in the premiums for the standard health benefit would affect them and others in vulnerable populations in this community. This was a useful exchange and provided an opportunity for me to hear firsthand the opinions

and real-time experiences of those most affected by changes in this area of health care in Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, this meeting was one of many as I indicated and it has become clear that our community will benefit from a constructive, facilitated and ongoing dialogue on all aspects of healthcare.

Therefore, **Mr. Speaker**, I have tasked the Ministry of Health, Seniors and Environment team to organize a summit on healthcare, set for July 22nd at Elbow Beach hotel from 9am to 1pm. Invitations have been sent to NGOs, insurers, the hospitals, doctors, nurses administrators of HIP, GEHI and FutureCare and the Bermuda Health Council. Together we will spend a morning setting out the priorities from each perspective that demands our acknowledgement, understanding and solutions. I expect a robust discussion but one in which each entity gains a greater understanding of the issues.

Mr. Speaker, this level of community engagement manifests this Government's commitment to listening to all stakeholders and ensuring that all voices are heard. In advising this Honourable House of this event, I wish to emphasize that this summit represents the beginning of a process. This is one important step in addressing our healthcare system issues through community engagement.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker**.