

Accelerating Implementation of the 2007 Port of Spain Declaration on Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs)

MEDIA AND SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS, HEALTH PROMOTION AND ADVOCACY

The 2007 Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Heads of Government Summit produced the landmark Port of Spain Declaration on NCDs. An evaluation of successes and challenges in implementing the Declaration's commitments has been undertaken.ⁱ This fact sheet highlights evaluation results, the current situation and how we can accelerate action.

2007 NCD Declaration mandates: Embrace the media as partners in NCD prevention and control

Where we are

- Only five out of 20 CARICOM Member States report having an NCD communications plan.
- There is the opportunity for more coordinated regionwide campaigns, including on Caribbean Wellness Day.
- Media and social communications have a key role in raising awareness about addressing NCD risk factors and helping to shape public opinion to make change politically possible.
- There is social communications expertise in the region, but it is expensive, and funding is not often available.

The way forward

Goal: to explore innovative ways to extend the breadth and depth of communications on NCDs to 'tell and sell the story'.

Policies and plans

- Explore and address social and cultural practices, which militate against healthy living.
- Countries should develop NCD communications plans, facilitated by templates.
- Provide these communications templates to key partners as a regional public good.
- Continue to build the Regional Health Communications Network facilitated by the Caribbean Public Health Agency.

Supporting activities

- Strengthen and maximise use of social media, e.g. innovative social media tools, such as an app for calorie counting local foods.
- Observe young people's communication trends to guide interventions.
- Explore innovative and effective ways to communicate and demonstrate relevance to the public of NCD risk factors for greater buy-in, promoting individual empowerment so people have the tools to make healthy choices.

- Identify sector champions.
- Expand partnerships, including with the private sector, to optimise available resources for advocacy.
- Promote the business case for supporting the NCD response (emphasising the relationship between health and economic productivity).
- Caribbean Wellness Day should be better marketed and related activity encouraged throughout the year.
- Provide briefs/talking points on priority public health issues for key audiences.
- Develop a communications toolkit with a number of products for a number of audiences.

We are making progress

Telling the story: Living with cancer



My name is Michelle O’Kieffe and I live in Trinidad. I was diagnosed with breast cancer in February 2000 at the age of 32.

I discovered a small lump just below my right breast. When I went to get it checked out... I didn’t have a clue that it could be cancer. There was no history of it in my family and I was young, 121 pounds, I didn’t smoke, I was vegetarian, really active.

But when I got the diagnosis, that the cancer had already spread, I took it in my stride. I saw it as another challenge, another hurdle to get over. My cancer was very aggressive. But I wasn’t giving up, that wasn’t even an option.

I’ve been in remission for quite a while and I’m looking to the future. I have a five year- old daughter, ChristyAnn, now. I’m starting a ‘survivorship programme’. I became a volunteer at the Trinidad and Tobago Cancer Society, offering all kinds of support. There are around 70 of us who meet once a month and I want to expand it.

One thing it’s important to mention is that cancer doesn’t only affect you physically, but emotionally, spiritually, financially...It’s a complete thing. You just have to try to be strong to deal with it all.

Visit our website at www.onecaribbeanhealth.org for full Evidence Briefs from the evaluation, recommendations for accelerating action and much more on NCDs.

