



PR#253-23

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Ministry of Health & Wellness Acknowledges the Recognition from PAHO/WHO**

*Belmopan, November 17, 2023.*

The Ministry of Health and Wellness, on behalf of the Government of Belize, acknowledges with deep appreciation the commendation from the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) for eliminating user fees at Belize's public hospitals.

Hon. Kevin Bernard, Minister of Health & Wellness, expressed gratitude for PAHO/WHO's recognition, saying, "This acknowledgment is a testament to the relentless efforts of our government to ensure universal access to health services for all Belizeans. It serves as a reminder of our commitment to removing barriers to healthcare and advancing the well-being of our people."

The decision to eliminate user fees in public hospitals is guided by the belief that access to healthcare is a fundamental right, not a privilege. This move is expected to significantly ease the burden on Belizean households, enabling more people to seek medical interventions promptly without worrying about the financial implications. It is a major stride towards the government's goal of achieving universal health coverage.

The ministry cherishes its collaborative relationship with PAHO/WHO and is grateful for the unwavering support offered towards improving Belize's health sector. The ministry's joint work with PAHO/WHO continues to foster capacity building and health sector transformation in Belize.

"We are committed to continuing our efforts to further strengthen our health systems, guided by the principles of primary health care," said Minister Bernard. "We look forward to our continued partnership with PAHO/WHO as we strive to enhance the health sector and ensure better health outcomes for our people."

The government's commitment to health care reform extends beyond eliminating user fees. The government is determined to continue the work of health system strengthening, ensuring that every Belizean has access to the quality health services they need, when and where they need them.

The Government of Belize and the Ministry of Health & Wellness thank PAHO/WHO for their recognition and remain steadfast in the shared mission of promoting health, preventing diseases, and improving the quality of life for all Belizeans.

The Ministry of Health & Wellness is dedicated to promoting and ensuring the health and wellness of the Belizean population by providing comprehensive, high-quality healthcare services, health promotion, and disease prevention programs.

## **Ends**

For more information, please contact:

Claudette Dakers-Norales

Information Officer

Ministry of Health & Wellness

[cnorales@health.gov.bz](mailto:cnorales@health.gov.bz)