



PR#527

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Ministry of Health & Wellness Receives Donation of Cold Chain Equipment from UNICEF**

*Belmopan, October 27, 2021. 4:45 p.m.*

Today, the Ministry of Health & Wellness received a donation of 100 cold boxes from UNICEF Belize during a handing over ceremony held at the National Vaccine building in Belmopan. The model ACB boxes were presented as a part of UNICEF's work to strengthen the national cold chain system for the provision of routine immunizations and COVID-19 vaccinations to children and families in remote and vulnerable communities.

Dr. Deysi Mendez, CEO in the Ministry of Health & Wellness, expressed gratitude on behalf of the ministry for the donation. She commended UNICEF for their continued partnership in ensuring the improvement of the quality of life of Belize's people, especially children. Dr. Mendez also noted the government's commitment to protecting Belizeans not only from COVID-19 but from other diseases.

Alison Parker, UNICEF Representative to Belize, shared that the donations demonstrate UNICEF's commitment to assisting the Ministry of Health & Wellness in strengthening its national systems to provide essential health services and COVID-19 response. Representative Parker explained, "COVID-19 vaccines roll-out must be balanced with the continuation of routine immunization and essential health services. Without a careful balance, children will be further at risk of vaccine-preventable diseases, undernutrition and other life-threatening illnesses which will leave a lasting economic impact on countries for years to come. Supporting the strengthening of national cold chain systems allow health workers and facilities to have the necessary equipment to perform critical life-saving work. It helps to save lives now and boost much-needed progress towards universal healthcare."

The cold boxes have a capacity of 18 liters and a cold life of 126 hours and 32 minutes. Paulette Wade, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist at UNICEF Belize, made the presentation to Dr. Mendez.

The Ministry of Health & Wellness continues to encourage persons to get tested and to maintain the COVID-19 safety protocols including washing hands often with soap and water, wearing face masks properly and maintaining physical distance and at all times.

**Ends**