



PR#57-22

## PRESS RELEASE

### Cabinet Brief

*Belmopan. 17<sup>th</sup> February 2022. 10:47 a.m.*

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met in regular session on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

- Cabinet met with the executive team of the National Health Insurance (NHI) to discuss the critical role of the NHI in the reform of the health sector. The Cabinet was informed of the implementation and performance of the NHI services in several areas of the country and its positive impact on these communities. Plans for the further rollout of the NHI Program, as outlined in Plan Belize, was also discussed and Cabinet will decide on the way forward after further deliberations.
- After discussion on a protocol to amend the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas in relation to the issue of the current implications of who is a CARICOM national, Cabinet gave its approval for signature of amendments to Article 32 of the treaty which defines a CARICOM national. This amendment will be signed at the Thirty-Third Intersessional Heads of Government Meeting to be held in Belize on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022.
- Cabinet gave its approval to introduce revised legislation to amend the Misuse of Drugs Bill, titled the Cannabis Control and Licensing Bill, 2022, to provide for the control and licensing of the cannabis industry and to establish the necessary legislative framework to govern and regulate the cultivation, processing, distribution, and delivery of cannabis products for adult use only.
- With a view to address the rising cost of living and in the interest of protection of consumers, legislative and enforcement measures shall be taken on a prompt basis to punish price gouging offenders with strict fines

per violation through a ticketing system. A public reporting system will also be established for the reporting of overpricing of controlled items. Cabinet will also consider other protection and relief mechanisms, especially for essential items, as it continues to closely monitor price movements.

- Cabinet was updated on the status of vaccinations and the number of vaccines available in Belize as of 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022. Currently, there are more than 299,400 vaccines on hand. As of 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022, 213,679 persons or 49.76 percent of the total population had received at least one dose of the vaccine and 205,678 or 47.81 percent of the total population has been fully vaccinated. Also, 30,671 Belizeans aged 12 to 17 years old have received at least one dose of the vaccine and 25,351 two doses. Additionally, over 35,449 booster shots have been issued to date. Boosters are now available to everyone (including those 12 to 17 years old), who have been fully vaccinated for three months or more.
- Finally, Cabinet continues to encourage the public to wear masks in public, maintain physical distance, wash hands regularly, and for those not fully vaccinated, to get vaccinated as soon as possible. Vaccines save lives.

**Ends**