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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Government of Belize Removes Fees in Public Hospitals, Promoting Universal Healthcare Access**

*Belmopan, October 31, 2023.*

The Government of Belize has approved the removal of all fees charged in public hospitals, a pivotal decision aimed at ensuring universal access to quality healthcare. This move eliminates financial barriers and enhances healthcare accessibility for all citizens, particularly low-income families.

The current system, which required patients to pay fees for services, posed a significant barrier to healthcare access. Additionally, administrative costs associated with fee collection strained the healthcare system. By removing fees, the government aims to improve healthcare access, reduce administrative burdens, and promote health equity.

Statistics reveal that revenue arrears for hospital care bills reached approximately 50% over the past three years, underscoring the need for change. Removing fees simplifies the billing process and allows healthcare facilities to focus on delivering quality care.

**It is important to note that the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital is not included in this initiative** as its needs will be evaluated separately; however, the government remains committed to ensuring quality healthcare access for all Belizeans.

The removal of fees in public hospitals aligns with the government's goal of achieving universal health coverage and health equity. Furthermore, this landmark decision sets an example for other nations and demonstrates Belize's dedication to fulfilling its social responsibility. Through this initiative, government expects to improve public health and enhance economic productivity.

The Government of Belize remains committed to the well-being of its citizens and will continue implementing measures that promote a healthier, more equitable Belize.

**Ends**