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PRESS RELEASE

Statement by the Ministry of Health and Wellness

Belmopan, January 25, 2026.

The Ministry of Health and Wellness expresses its condolences to the family of Jenny Pinelo on the passing of her baby. The Ministry also takes the opportunity to share information to clarify some concerns that relatives and the public may have.

Contrary to media reports, the reported lack of platelets did not contribute to the death of Jenny Pinelo's baby.

Between January 15 and January 22, 2026, 76 units of platelets were delivered to the Karl Huesner Memorial Hospital (KMH) upon request.

On January 21, the KMH requested 18 units of platelets from the blood bank, which were immediately supplied. Again, on January 22, another request came from KMH for 23 units, and again it was honoured immediately. All requests for platelets for Jenny Pinelo were honoured immediately.

It should be noted that the blood issued to patients is not necessarily the blood units donated by the respective replacement donors; the shelf life of a blood unit is 90 days. The purpose of the blood bank is to screen and store blood so it is always readily available. However, every effort is made for the relatives to replace the blood used.

Once a medical practitioner makes a request for blood for a patient, that request is honoured.

The Blood Bank of Belize has no shortage of blood, blood products, supplies, or reagents to screen the blood. Blood drives are conducted continuously countrywide to ensure there is always an appropriate stock.

At the national level, all public hospitals, including the KMH, have sufficient stock available, especially on weekends. A medical technologist is ALWAYS on call, should there be a need.

The public is assured that the blood bank is given priority to ensure that all necessary reagents and supplies to provide blood and blood products are available.

Ends