

Newsletter



Ministry of Health

Issue 5

March 2017

57 HEALTH AND SOCIAL STUDIES GRADUATES EMERGE AS PROFESSIONALS



NIHSS graduates pose for souvenir photos on steps at ICCS

57 graduates from the National Institute for Health and Social Studies received their diplomas in a memorable ceremony held at the Seychelles International Conference Centre (ICCS) on Friday 10th March 2017 in front of proud friends, families and instructors.

Also attending the ceremony was the Designated Minister, Mrs Macsuzy,

Mondon, the Minister for Health and Social Affairs, Mr Jean Paul Adam the Principal Secretary for Health, Dr Bernard Valentin, the Principal Secretary for Social Affairs, Mrs Linda William Melanie and several sponsors of prizes for the ceremony.

The graduates undertook courses in health and social studies for a period of two and three years and 11

received their Diplomas in Nursing, 13 Diplomas in Environmental Health Sciences, 3 Diplomas in Pharmaceutical Sciences, 20 Diplomas in Social Work, and 14 received Advanced Diplomas in Midwifery.

Animating the ceremony was the NIHSS choir, a group of vocally talented students, who performed

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HEALTH BOOSTER

Take some time out to do something you love every single day. This is a great way to relax and reduce stress. Do something that you love and enjoy. It can be something small, such as cooking your favourite meal, reading a new book, or watching your favourite TV show.



renditions of two popular songs 'Try Everything' and 'History' for their peers, aptly reminding the graduates to be courageous on their new journey and that no matter where their individual paths lead them, they will remain a team.

A highly anticipated part of the afternoon was the presentation of awards to graduates with great performances in their respective courses.

Awards for Best Performers and Best in Practice were bestowed unto two outstanding graduates from each field of study.

The three most awaited awards for the afternoon were Best Effort Student, the newly introduced award for Best Person-Centred Care Student and the highly coveted Outstanding Student Award. Aaron Barrack, a Diploma in Nursing graduate received the Best Effort Award, while another nursing student, Vanessa Bristol, received the award for Best Person-Centred Care Student.

The Outstanding Student Award went to Lindy Legras, who undertook a Diploma in Social Work, resulting in tumultuous applause from the crowd. A teary-eyed but overjoyed Lindy accepted her prizes from the Designated Minister and the Minister for Health and Social Affairs.

"I really wasn't expecting to win this award today," says Lindy Legras. "I am very happy. Especially since I wasn't initially interested in Social Work. It is an interest that just sparked up and I have learnt a lot. I am still learning, now that I have started working. I'm continuously discovering various issues that families face. But, at the end of the day I am happy because I love helping people and helping them overcome challenges gives me satisfaction."

The graduates ended the ceremony with a pledge to practice their profession faithfully and with dignity so as to ensure the total health and well-being of their patient and client.



Student receives award

SECOND CHOICE TURNS PASSION

Vanessa Bristol joined NIHSS in 2013, to study a Diploma in Nursing. Her transition from secondary school to the hustle and bustle of the institute would not be an easy one.

Having accompanied her son on overseas treatment at the start of the school semester, Vanessa started her studies 3 weeks later than she expected to.

Despite this delay, she remained positive in her expectations. "I thought that it would be fun and that I would gather a lot of experience," Vanessa said. "Plus, I knew that I would meet a lot of other students and that meant making new friends."

The health care route, had not been her initial choice. Passionate about journalism from a young age, Nursing had been Vanessa's second choice when applying to continue her studies. A choice that she

is passionate about today.

Still, studying at NIHSS came with its challenges. "It wasn't easy. Juggling motherhood and school was quite difficult. I quite had a lot of late nights," she admits with a smile. Vanessa credits her perseverance to the support she received from the faculty as well as her family who stood by her on her journey.

Vanessa's journey at NIHSS came with its rewards. During her graduation earlier this month, Vanessa received the person-centred care award. This award not reflects who she is as a health worker but also in her everyday life. "I was not expecting to win this award," said Vanessa. "I am happy that I did. I think it embodies all that I do in my work. I meet different people and I need to have different approaches for each. I always try to be empathic and to put myself in patient's place so as to give them the best care."



A JOURNEY TO REMEMBER

LINDY LEGRAS RECOUNTS HER YEARS AT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL STUDIES

At 47 years old, Lindy Legras, a resident of North East Point, graduated from the National Institute of Health and Social Studies as the Outstanding Student for the year 2017. A 3 year journey that she describes as quite challenging but never uninteresting.

Lindy started her studies at the institute in 2014 taking on a Diploma in Social Work. As she sits at the desk of her well-lit office at the Glacis Primary School, where she currently works as a counsellor, she recounts her journey.

Inspired by the work she was already doing as a teacher, first in secondary then at school of visual arts, and the concerns that she regularly saw many of her students faces, Lindy decided she had to take up further training so as to learn more about understanding people and how to help them overcome challenging situations.

“It’s like I already had a gift for noticing when my students and other people I would come across were going through a trying situation. I was already helping them in dealing with their troubles to the best of my abilities but I had to learn more about how to adequately assist them. I knew there was more to what I was doing,” she says during the interview.

Lindy was driven by this passion. Therefore she conducted some research and enquired on how to proceed. After being referred to the Diploma in Social Work at NIHSS, she knew that it was the path she was meant to take. So, Lindy applied for the course with the aim of one day returning back to teaching. “I planned to eventually go back to teaching. The course would have just provided me with

additional experience and knowledge to cater to the students who would approach me with their troubles.”

Adapting to the practices of the institute was not an easy process. The first concern she would encounter is the age difference from her classmates, most of which were secondary school leavers. Lindy along with the three other mature students in her class feared the boldness of such a young group of students.

Indeed, the loud and bolsterous approach of her fellow classmates proved to be quite disturbing but not insurmountable. “It wasn’t easy. I even thought twice about joining a group of students that I most probably taught. But, I took it up upon myself and some kind of a compromise was reached, because we all knew we had a goal and we had to accommodate each other to reach our goals,” says Lindy. And it is with this small consensus that her journey continued.

Other than her initial expectations, Lindy did not know much about what the subject would entail. She uncovered new ways to tackle situations faced by students, and learnt a new approach to taking things up. Still, the journey did not come without challenges. One major challenge was the subject itself, which came many terms and many theories that often baffled her. Despite this, Lindy was resilient and refused to give up, even when the thought crossed her mind.

Instead she approached people and discussed the challenges she faced and was received advice and words of encouragement from families, lecturers and friends. “My husband supported me a lot during my three

years of studies and he pushed me to finish what I had started,” she added.

Lindy did continue her journey, setting a very good example for her children by giving it her best to win the Outstanding Student Award. “I am extremely happy that I won. Though I didn’t know for sure that I would receive it, a part of me felt it was a possibility. And I am so happy that I set this example for my daughters. If at this age I still have this much to offer, I believe they can offer a lot more.”

Lindy further extended a thank you to all the staff at the institution who encouraged her, god who saw her through the difficulties and her family who gave her continuous support.



PENDING QUESTIONS ON HEALTH CARE ADVANCEMENTS

ANSWERED

The aim of the Ministry of Health to provide quality services was stressed upon in a media conference held on Tuesday 14th March 2017 at the Sheikh Kalifah Diagnostic Centre.

The Minister for Health, Mr Jean Paul Adam responded to many media queries about actions being undertaken by the Ministry following the President of the Republic of Seychelles, Mr Danny Faure's, State of Nation Address earlier this year.

The media conference ensued an initial management meeting that morning, in which various entities of the Ministry presented 2016 reports. The presentations went strategies employed in 2016 as well as those that did not work.

Assisting the Minister were members of the central management team and presenters in the meeting, the Principal Secretary for Health, Dr Bernard Valentin, the Deputy CEO of the Health Care Agency, Dr Danny Louange, Chairperson of the National AIDS Council, Dr Anne Gabriel, and the Public Health



Minister Adam addresses media's questions

Commissioner, Dr Jude Gedeon.

Minister Adam stressed on the importance of having quality services delivered to patients by addressing issues such as training and human resources. "It takes three years to train a health worker," said Minister Adam.

"We would not wish to take shortcuts

to getting more health workers burather emphasise on this mandatory training period. This will ensure the best quality of care provided."

Minister Adam further added that to resolve the issue of human resources, other methods of remedying the situation will be employed. "We plan on employing expatriate nurses as a short term measure, until demand can be met with enough graduates," said Minister Adam.

The Minister along with his team also took the opportunity to further reinforce the Ministry's campaign, "My Health, My Responsibility".

"My Health, My Responsibility' is a shared responsibility." Minister Adam affirmed. "It does mean that the Ministry of Health excludes itself from this responsibility. On the contrary, the campaign makes a call to the population to be more active in their care and help the Ministry of Health of in caring for them."



Participants listen to reviews from different entities of the Ministry

AGREEMENT REINFORCES RELATIONSHIP WITH SPONSORS

The North East Point Hospital and Hospice consolidated its partnership with faithful contributors, local telecommunications company, Cable and Wireless Seychelles Ltd and non-governmental organisation, Friends of North East Point Home and Hospice in a jovial ceremony held at the hospice on Wednesday 8th March 2017.

To bind the long-standing relationship between these three organisations and the donation to the hospital and hospice of 21 new cable TV subscriptions, internet connection and accompanying flat screen TVs from Cable and Wireless Seychelles Ltd, three representatives signed a memorandum of understanding.

The signatories, Mr Charles Hammond, Chief Executive Officer of Cable and Wireless Seychelles Ltd, Mrs Rose Mary-Lee Bluemner, Chairperson of Friends of North East Point Home and Hospice, and Dr Danny Louange, Deputy CEO of Health Care Agency, exchanged copies of the agreement in the presence of staff of the hospital and hospice, representatives from cable wireless ltd and health department staff.



Dr Danny Louange (middle), Deputy CEO Health Care Agency, exchanges signed documents with the CEO of Cable and Wireless Ltd Seychelles, Mr Charles Hammond (left) and the Chairperson of FNEPHH, Mrs Rose-Mary Lee Bluemner (right)

“This agreement signifies a positive relationship. It shows that there are others in the community who care and are interested in partnering in our services,” says Ms Isabelle Joubert, Nurse Manager at the North East Point Hospital and Hospice. “We are privileged to have people who are willing to join us.”

Connections to these new services begun during the last quarter of 2016 and ended early this year. Already, patients on the wards are enjoying the selection of new programmes while staff make use of the new internet subscription to conduct further research into performing better palliative care.

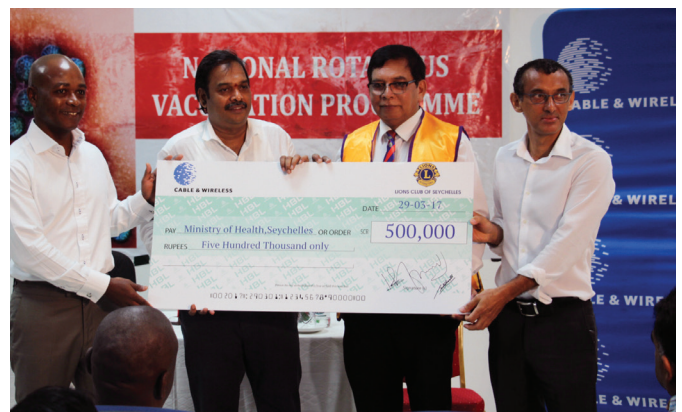
NEW VACCINE FOR INFANTS

The Health Care Agency received a donation of 500,000 Seychelles Rupees from Lions Club Seychelles and Cable and Wireless Seychelles Ltd, on Wednesday 29th March 2017, in the first ever donation of vaccines from local sponsors.

It was in the presence of the Minister for Health, Minister Jean Paul Adam, the Special Advisor to the Minister, Dr Loren Reginald, a WHO Liaison Officer, Dr Humphrey Karamagi, the Seychelles Ambassador for Women and Children, Dr Erna Athanasius and numerous management staff of the Ministry as well as, members of the Lions Club Seychelles that the Deputy CEO of Health Care Agency, Dr Danny Louange, accepted the cheque

from the CEO of Cable and Wireless, Mr Charles Hammond and two Lions Club representatives, Mr Ramu Rillay and Dr K. Viveganandran.

The donation follows a survey to observe the rate of rotavirus infection, conducted amongst 7000 children admitted on the paediatric ward of the Seychelles hospital since 2012. “Children are more likely to spread the virus. It is transmitted through infected stool or objects. Children put these objects, such as toys, and their hands in their mouths, quite often,” says Mrs Bistoquet,



Dr Danny Louange (right) accepts donation from sponsors

Director Family Health and Nutrition Unit at the Health Care Agency.

Rotavirus is common among infants from 0 to five years. About 30% of the sample from the Seychelles hospital tested positive for the virus. The vaccine will be administered to children aged 6 months old starting September 2017.

WOMEN'S DAY

EXCHANGE EMPOWERS WOMEN TO 'BE BOLD FOR CHANGE' IN MATERNITY CARE

Women's Day 2016, was commemorated in a distinctive way at the Health Department on Wednesday 8th March 2016, with a discussion held at the Sheikh Kalifah Diagnostic Centre Conference Room. In line with this year's theme for International Women's Day 'Be Bold for Change' the discussion aimed to empower pregnant women to become active participants in the care they receive, while improving the services they are offered as expectant mothers.

The turnout for this remarkable approach towards such a special day was quite specular. In attendance was the Minister for Health and Social Affairs, Mr Jean Paul Adam, who listened intently to points raised and at many occasions agreed to recommendations brought forward from the research but also those raised amongst the crowd. Also present, was the Seychelles Ambassador for Women and Children Dr Erna Athanasius, two female members of the National Assembly Glacis and Roche Caiman, Hon. Regina Esparon and Hon. Jany De Letourdie, members of the Seychelles Women's Trust, and numerous health department staff.

"I am greatly honoured by the presence of the Minister in this unique activity," says Ms Veroniqua Bresson, organiser of the meeting. "However, I am not satisfied with the overall turnout from the Health Department, because of the absence of people in decision making position."

Leading the discussion themed, 'Ed Nou, Pour Ed Ou' was Ms Patricia Donovan, Mid-wife at the Seychelles Hospital and part time lecturer and the National Institute for Health and Social Studies. Ms Donovan presented the results from a survey conducted amongst 151 pregnant women, aged 18 to 35, who gave birth at the Seychelles hospital in 2016. The main aim of



Ms Patricia Donovan leads the presentation

this research was to explore women's expectations of and satisfaction with the maternity services they receive. 11 recommendations were interpreted from responses in the survey sustaining the discussion that afternoon.

Some of the key trends discussed was enlightening to the researchers as well as the audience. An essential note made amongst those present was, the high level of unplanned births at 56.7 and astonishingly, the high level of satisfaction recorded amongst respondents. This interesting turn of events caused for a deeper evaluation to be made through further discussions, bringing to light how pregnant women have little to no expectations of the care they are receiving.

This precise observation highlighted the main aim for the survey as well as recommendation that most resonated

throughout the audience. Maternity care should focus on building a partnership with expectant mothers, to ensure that they know exactly what is happening to her body, the decisions she can make throughout consultations and also her rights.

"I am very happy with the participation of the midwives, pregnant women and external partners in the talk. Their discussions provided some good recommendations that we plan to implement in programmes and guidelines for maternity care," explains Ms Bresson while discussing the recommendations received from the audience.

A new study will be conducted amongst pregnant women when programmes for maternity care have been altered to involve them more. The researchers hope this will reflect new results.



Participants had the chance to share their thoughts and ask questions

ROSES DITRIBUTED TO CELEBRATE SPECIAL DAY



Ladies received roses

The hardworking women of the Ministry were brilliantly celebrated on Wednesday 8th March 2017 to commemorate Women's Day. Several small celebrations were organised within various sections culminating to a larger fête in the afternoon.

From early Wednesday morning, men selected by the Human Resources Officers, assumed the roles of heralds, equipped with their panniers in search of the lovely woman spread all across the compound to

bestow a rose upon. Women from all over rejoiced at their beautiful gift. We all know for sure, or maybe as an assumption, that women love flowers. And, the little rose-shaped soap distributed that Wednesday indeed won their hearts.

Celebrations for women's day came together in the afternoon under the red roof building veranda, where all the women from the Mont Fleuri premises gathered for a final commemoration of the day.

This time, the Minister led the event, serving an array of snacks and refreshments to the women. More than 30 of the ladies from the Health Care Agency, Public Health Authority and other sections showed up to celebrate the strength and beauty of women and enjoy the food.

Savoundaravally Foundation and Dr. Sethu Chetty, a private practitioner.

Representatives from the donating organisations, the President of the Seychelles Centennial Women Lions Club, Mrs Dhana Sasikumar, Mrs Sashi Senthil, from the K.D Pillay Savoundaravally Foundation and Dr Sethu Chetty, presented the four computers to the Director of Community Health Services, Mr Nicholas Shamlaye.



Computer being used in the pharmacy

This setup is worth approximately 500,000. It will provide a link between various areas of the health centre to facilitate communication and service delivery. "This new system will enable the computerisation of patients' records and for now the easy interaction between three main areas of the health centre to improve service delivery," says Ms May Malcouzane, Nurse Manager.

Presently, patients' records can now be accessed in the consultation room and the doctor will be able to send prescriptions directly to the pharmacy.

Though this initiative offers some basic options, several key improvements are expected. "This project will greatly reduce the number of patients' records and test results that gets lost. It will also reduce the waiting time for patients who make use of the health centre," said Mrs Dhana Sasikumar, who is also a staff at the health centre.

Once it is fully operational, digital registries to record will also be added.

NO MORE LOST RECORDS OR TEST RESULTS



Souvenir photo at the ceremony

The English River Health Centre received an upgrade in a short ceremony held at the Health Centre, on Tuesday 28th March 2017.

The ceremony which was attended by the Seychelles Ambassador for Women

and Children, Dr Erna Athanasius, National Assembly Members and District Administrators for the central region and several staff of the health centre, celebrated the donation of four computers the Seychelles Centennial Women Lions Club, the K.D Pillay

QUALITY TIME WITH STAFF BRINGS QUALITY WORK



A visit from those in charge is all boost and encourages hard work. This was the sentiment from the staff at the Blue Roof, Green Roof and Anse Royale health centre on the Minister for Health, Minister Jean Paul Adam's visits during the month of March.

The staff of these imperative establishments extended a warm welcome to the Minister who began his visit on the Mont Fleuri premises, at the Blue Roof Building on Friday 10th March 2017 followed by a tour of the Anse Royale health centre on Friday 17th March and the Green Roof Building on Friday 24th March 2017.

"It is important to visit our staff to interact with them, to give them a chance to voice their concerns," Minister Adam said during an interview.

Minister Adam interacted with numerous staff, who forthwith discussed certain challenges with him, especially the most pertinent one. Staff also took this time to



share positive accomplishments with the minister, as well as future plans.

"I am very happy I got to voice my opinion and that many of the doubts I had were cleared up," said Mrs Florida Bijoux, EPI Manager, in Family Health and Nutrition. Mrs Bijoux further expressed she felt that the Minister visiting alone allowed her to properly address her issues to him.

This was a sentiment shared amongst two other staff working in the two buildings, Dr Jastin Bibi in Epidemiology and Statistics and Mrs Winnifred Agricole, from the Seychelles Nurses and Midwives Council.

Dr Bibi further expressed his happiness that the minister took some time out from his busy schedule to personally acquaint with staff. "I am very happy that the Minister has conducted this impromptu visit. It's a nice initiative for him to acquaint with the staff, learn more about the work they do, and understand the challenges they face".

At the Anse Royale Health Centre, Minister Adam engaged not only with the staff but with district authorities and the elected member for the district to review the services that is being offered and ways to improve not just these services but also the establishment in accordance to the hospital redevelopment project.

HIGHLIGHTS

Representatives of 9 non-governmental organisations met with members of the Patient Centred Care Steering Committee on Friday 24th March 2017 to talk about person-centred care. The aim of the meeting was for them to map out a common path forward. Topics discussed during the meeting include strategies to improve communication and access of health services to persons with disability, the demotivation of staff and how this affects services, amongst many others.

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The Principal Secretary for Health, Dr Bernard Valentin and the Public Health Commissioner, Dr Jude Gedeon, joined by numerous staff of the ministry rallied to intensify the two year campaign against "UNITE TO END TB" Leave No One Behind, in a half day workshop at the Sheikh Kalifah Conference Room on Wednesday 22nd March 2017. This was on the occasion of World Tuberculosis Day, commemorated every year on 24th March. The workshop was successful with contributions from all participants.

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The Public Health Authority promptly refuted false claims propagated on social media earlier this month, about the existence of an unknown mosquito borne virus circulating in Seychelles. The article, allegedly published in the Khaleej Times, advised people not to travel to Seychelles. The Public Health Authority reassured that there was no such virus circulating in the country.

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Four new doctors have joined the Health Care Agency. Abhisheka Vidya Moothoosamy, a Mauritian is currently a dentist. Dr. Ashweena Chintaram, also from Mauritius is working as a Medical Officer. Dr. Sunil Hake is from India and has been appointed as a will be joining as a Physician. Dr. Ajithkumar Palanichamy, also from India, will be joining as a Pediatrician .

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The Ministry has also welcomed other new appointments. Ms Gylia Mein has been appointed Acting Chief Nursing Officer. Dr Loren Reginald is the Special Advisor to the Minister.