



**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**  
**TO THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**  
**BY THE HONOURABLE KIM N. WILSON, JP, MP**  
**MINISTER OF HEALTH**  
**Health Workforce Planning**  
**16<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

**Mr Speaker** and Honourable Members,

I rise this morning to inform you of the Ministry of Health's activities to improve health workforce planning in Bermuda. As mentioned in the House, on several occasions over the past two years, the **Bermuda Health Strategy** and the **Health Action Plan 2014-2019** both included health workforce planning as a strategic priority for the health system.

Bermuda's health workforce planning effort was inspired by, and is aligned with, the World Health Organizations' ***Global Strategy on Human Resource for Health: Workforce 2030***.

The overall goal is to “improve health, social and economic development outcomes by ensuring universal availability, accessibility... and quality of the health workforce...”

As we know, **Mr Speaker**, the health challenges facing Bermuda in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are complex and long-standing. As in the rest of the world, including developed countries, there are many social, economic, political, cultural and environmental changes that are impacting every aspect of life. The health system, in particular, is being impacted by multiple factors. And the health of Bermudians is impacted by all these factors in a variety of ways.

**Mr. Speaker,**

The objective of the health workforce planning process was to assess the current health workforce situation in Bermuda and identify strategic lines of action to improve it so as to addresses the healthcare needs of our residents well into the future. The specific task of addressing health workforce planning was assigned to the Office of the Chief Medical Officer.

While the effort was spearheaded by the Office of the CMO, it required the engagement and wholehearted participation of

multiple sectors of the community over the past two years. Consultation included private, public and hospital-based healthcare professionals, health administrators, human resource professionals, the statutory professional bodies, education, insurance, immigration and workforce development representatives. Technical guidance and support were also supplied by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

Primary stakeholder consultation extended from April 2016 to December 2017. Health system data and health professional feedback were collected using key informant interviews, focus groups, meetings with a core group of stakeholders in health, a review of relevant literature, and four major stakeholder workshops held between April 2016 and September 2017. The effort to create the situation analysis was robust.

**Mr. Speaker,**

The Ministry of Health wishes to publically acknowledge the dozens of health system stakeholders who gave time and expertise to this project and we extends our heartfelt gratitude to them.

**Mr Speaker,**

The health workforce planning process, resulted in two documents:

***Bermuda Health Workforce 2017*** provides a situation analysis and a context for the companion document, ***Human Resources for Health Strategic Plan, Bermuda 2018-2020***. Both documents are published on the government website under **Health Reports**.

There were a multitude of interesting findings as well as valuable consensus recommendations as to how to address our health workforce situation. I will offer just a couple examples here as a preview to whet the appetite.

**Mr Speaker,**

Not surprisingly, our population health information paints a picture of an island community burdened by chronic preventable diseases. The evidence shows this will worsen over the coming decades unless there are changes. The future clearly requires a health workforce that is highly skilled, and capable of effective health promotion, health education and complex chronic disease management.

Several categories of healthcare professionals were evaluated in terms of composition, numbers, skills mix and qualifications. The findings were interesting and the implications thought-provoking.

For example, **Mr Speaker**, our nursing professionals hail from a vast geographic distribution and reflect the global diversity of the health workforce in Bermuda.

Currently only 28% of nursing professionals are Bermudian, leaving the island vulnerable to global social, economic and political circumstances, and dependent on local immigration policy and procedures. As a result, the profession of nursing is considered a vulnerable category of healthcare professionals in Bermuda.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Amongst medical practitioners, there is the perception of over-supply of general practitioners, many non-Bermudians, and a heavy reliance on non-Bermudian specialist expertise. The situation has a clear explanation, but one which must be carefully

managed to assure stability in both the primary care sector and adequate number of specialists in essential areas.

Specialties anticipated to be of importance for managing chronic preventable conditions in the coming decades are geriatrics, internal medicine, oncology and some of the surgical sub-specialties.

Opportunities must be identified to attract Bermudians to the areas of medicine with a projected need, and to assure that their training is of a uniformly high quality.

**Mr Speaker,**

***Human Resources for Health Strategic Plan, 2018-2020*** aims to assure Bermuda is prepared to meet 21<sup>st</sup> Century health needs.

The recommendations focus on three important strategic areas:

- 1- Governance - includes improving regulatory oversight of the health professions, developing a health information system and database; and collaborating to reform healthcare financing and reimbursement.
- 2- Education and Training - includes improving scholastic achievement of Bermuda's school children by promoting

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education so that young Bermudians can qualify for careers in health. It also recommends providing training opportunities for adult workers to allow those interested to transition into health fields.

- 3- Access to quality human resources for health - that is, allowing efficient recruitment and retention of health professionals and assuring that health professionals maintain the highest level of competence, especially in the area of prevention and management of chronic diseases.

**Mr Speaker,**

In the coming year, the Ministry of Health looks forward to using this information and continuing collaborations with health stakeholders, including the general public, to assure Bermuda has the necessary human resources for health.

Thank you, **Mr Speaker.**