



**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
TO THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
BY THE HONOURABLE KIM N. WILSON, JP, MP
MINISTER OF HEALTH**

THE BERMUDA HEALTH STRATEGY 2022-2027

18 February 2022

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members,

I rise today to share with Honourable Members the Bermuda Health Strategy 2022-2027.

Mr Speaker,

This House will recall the previous Health Strategy covered the years 2014 to 2019.

In 2019, the Ministry of Health began work to create a new strategy for the next five years (2020 to 2025) which could provide a framework for a redesign of the healthcare system – the Government’s intention to transition to universal health coverage being a clear and stated goal by that time.

Mr Speaker,

This earlier work included a public survey, as well as surveys of, and interviews with, providers, insurers, health professionals and patients. A series of workshops with a Strategic Leadership Group held in March 2020 assisted in identifying design principles for a refreshed Health Strategy. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, no further progress was made.

In early summer 2021, a second group of dedicated stakeholders from across Bermuda’s healthcare community, responded positively to a request from the Ministry to form a steering committee whose main purpose would be to develop a roadmap for strengthening the island’s health system and achieving universal health coverage. In parallel with that work, the Ministry of Health, supported by the advisory division of KPMG, started again to develop the next iteration of the Bermuda Health Strategy.

Mr Speaker,

The Bermuda Health Strategy 2022- 2027, which I am sharing today, includes the contributions of both the pre-pandemic leadership group as well as the UHC steering committee members. It also further develops and, in some cases, updates the goals established in the previous Strategy. Thanks to the hard work of both of these groups, and that of KPMG, we now have a refreshed and revised Strategy.

Mr Speaker,

I am also pleased to report that the Bermuda Health Strategy 2022-2027 represents one of the first actions to emerge from the roadmap for universal health coverage (UHC).

Honourable Members will recall that ‘stewardship and governance’ is one of three pillars on which the initial high-level universal health coverage roadmap is built. This pillar calls for a refreshed healthcare strategy to provide a clear and central vision to guide our community.

Mr Speaker,

The new Strategy provides a clear vision for a healthy Bermuda community. It also reconfirms the Government's commitment to universal health coverage, the achievement of which will ensure coverage of essential healthcare benefits for all residents, through the Bermuda Health Plan, within a stronger, more sustainable healthcare system.

Mr Speaker,

The new Bermuda Health Strategy specifies, and is arranged around, eight strategic principles which will direct our work.

The strategic principles are:

- promoting healthy living and preventative care,
- focusing on people-centered care,
- understanding our population's health needs,
- providing universal access to healthcare coverage,
- strengthening our healthcare workforce,
- harnessing healthcare technology,
- partnership and collaborative working, and,
- preventing wasteful care and promoting efficiency.

Mr Speaker,

These principles align with the Ministry's vision of:

“healthy people in healthy communities”.

They also align with our mission which seeks “to make Bermuda healthier” and ensure -

“all people have equitable access to needed informative, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative essential health services, of sufficient quality to be effective, while also ensuring that people do not suffer financial hardship when paying for these services and critical medicines.”

Mr Speaker,

The Strategy sets out the health need associated with each principle, and indicates a path for its achievement as well as potential measures for its success. Collectively, the principles frame the need for both universal health coverage and health system strengthening, and, also, provide a pathway for achieving them.

I would like to draw attention to some of the strategic principles we will be following in the coming years.

First, the new Health Strategy places front and centre **promoting healthy living and preventative care.**

Mr Speaker,

We know that health promotion and disease prevention are essential ingredients in building a stronger health system. In the coming months, we will be joining forces with other healthcare and community stakeholders to ensure this message is amplified and reaches all segments of our Bermuda population.

Many of the chronic illnesses impacting our community and placing a heavy burden on our healthcare resources are strongly related to lifestyle factors such as poor diet, physical inactivity and smoking. We understand that more must be done to empower and support people to lead healthy lifestyles, and we will do that.

The emphasis on health promotion includes mental health as well. There is a recognized need to challenge historical stigma and preconceptions. Good physical and mental health are collectively a part of our efforts to promote wellness and healthier living.

Mr Speaker,

Another highlight of this Strategy is its focus on the need for greater collaboration among healthcare industry stakeholders as embodied in the strategic principle **partnership and collaborative working**. We are building stronger partnerships so that together, we can find solutions to the health challenges the Island is facing.

As stated previously in this House, critically important for the work on universal health coverage is the engagement of, and collaboration with, the broad group of stakeholders who form part of Bermuda's health system. Such collaboration includes working with partners to bring about better coordination of healthcare delivery to ensure the effective and efficient utilisation of our health system.

We believe understanding and improving our care pathways will strengthen the health system by defining standards, promoting and disseminating best practices and increasing resident and care provider satisfaction. The collaboration needed to achieve this is enshrined in the new Health Strategy as a strategic principle.

Finally, **Mr Speaker,**

The Strategy also features the shift to **focusing on people-centered care** to deliver essential care that meets the needs of individuals and families and improves their health outcomes.

With this changed approach, which I have mentioned previously in this House, we expect to bring about health system reforms that enable people to feel more included in the decision-making process around their health and wellness, and improve the patient and family experience as a whole.

Mr Speaker,

The Bermuda Health Strategy 2022-2027 is available on gov.bm now, and we look forward to receiving the community's feedback via moh@gov.bm.

Mr Speaker,

In closing, we understand that the positive transformations we need to see will not happen overnight. After all, we reached this point over many years. Bermuda's health system challenges are complex and require collaboration between all stakeholders to realise the people-centered, multi-year change necessary for a more sustainable future.

However, I am grateful for the work that has been done to date to develop the Bermuda Health Strategy 2022-2027, and I am optimistic about our path forward to creating a more equitable and efficient health care system for all Bermuda's residents.

Thank you, **Mr Speaker.**