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**Summary of Proceedings  
Public Hearing**

*Joint Select Committee on Local Authorities, Service Commissions and Statutory Authorities  
(including the THA)*

Held on Friday November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016

[10:15a.m. to 12: 23p.m.]

**Subject matter:** inquiry into the regulation and licensing of Medical Doctors by the Medical Board

**Objectives of the inquiry**

The objectives of the inquiry are:

- **To understand the systems and procedures employed by the Medical Board and its Council to execute its mandate.**
- **To assess the practises and procedures adhered to by the Medical Council in relation to disciplinary proceedings involving medical doctors.**
- **To assess the criteria, standards and procedures in place for hiring and monitoring the performance of foreign Doctors**
- **To assess the systems in place to protect patients against malpractice by Doctors**

**Venue:** J. Hamilton Maurice Room, Mezzanine Floor, Office of the Parliament, Tower D, the Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre, 1A Wrightson Road, Port of Spain

**Committee members**

The following committee members were present:

- i. Mr. H. R. Ian Roach (Chairman)
- ii. Ms. Ramona Ramdial, MP (Vice-Chairman)
- iii. Mrs. Jennifer Baptiste-Primus

- iv. Mr. Nigel De Freitas
- v. Mr. Daniel Solomon

**Witnesses who appeared**

The following officials appeared before the Committee:

**Ministry of Health**

- i. Mr. Richard Madray - Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health
- ii. Ms. Dianne Dhanpath - Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health
- iii. Dr. Akenath Misir - Chief Medical Officer, Ministry of Health
- iv. Mr. Asif Ali, Health - Sector Advisor, Ministry of Health
- v. Mr. David Benjamin - General Manger, NIPDEC
- vi. Ms. Marissa Austin - Head of Pharmaceutical (Ag.), NIPDEC

**Medical Board of Trinidad and Tobago**

- vii. Professor Terrence Anand Seemungal- President, Medical Board of Trinidad and Tobago (MBTT)

**Key Issues Discussed**

The following are the key subject areas/issued discussed during the hearing:

*Issues raised with the President of the Council of the Medical Board of Trinidad and Tobago (MBTT)*

- i. The failure of the Medical Board to implement a Specialist Registry in Trinidad and Tobago;
- ii. Notwithstanding the absence of a Register of Specialists, there are Medical Practitioners who operate in a specialist capacity. It was noted that some specialist Doctors who practice locally qualify as Specialists in foreign jurisdictions;
- iii. The importance of Continuous Medical Education (CME) in the professional development of medical practitioners and the need for CME to be made mandatory;
- iv. Whether there was a requirement for private Doctors to have liability insurance as a prerequisite for practicing medicine;
- v. The issue of local and foreign medical doctors in Trinidad and Tobago failing to renew their annual registration/license with the Medical Board;
- vi. The lack of regulations to stipulate the fees which are charged by medical practitioners;
- vii. The relatively slow rate of disposal of matters before the Council and the advantages of appointing full-time Council members as opposed to part-time members as currently exist;

- viii. The need for the MBTT to collaborate with the Ministry of Health to establish a malpractice registry;
- ix. The increase in malpractice cases against medical practitioners;
- x. The under reporting of malpractice disputes filed against medical practitioners;
- xi. The need for the Medical Board to play a more active role in dealing with malpractice complaints brought against Doctors.

*Issues raised with officials of the Ministry of Health*

- i. The failure of the Ministry to address the matter of unregistered doctors practicing medicine within various medical institutions;
- ii. The shortage of Specialist doctors within the public health institutions;
- iii. The lack of job opportunities for medical practitioners and specialists returning from abroad;
- iv. Lack of local Specialist Medical training programmes (e.g. Forensic Pathology);
- v. The necessity for more junior medical officers to be engaged in postgraduate programmes;
- vi. The need for the University of the West Indies to expand and develop areas of Specialist training;
- vii. The implication of Doctors operating in both the public and private sector.

*Issues raised with officials of NIPDEC*

- i. The Tendering process used by NIPDEC to procure pharmaceuticals on behalf of the State;
- ii. The option of sourcing drugs through PAHO;
- iii. The failure of NIPDEC to engage in independent comparative research on the price of pharmaceuticals;
- iv. The lack of an integrated information management system to assist with monitoring the inventory of drugs in the public health care system;
- v. The fact that approximately \$63 Million in expired drugs has accumulated over the past six (6) years;
- vi. Including a Vendor Returns option as a condition of contracts with local distributors to reduce the amount of unused drugs to be disposed;
- vii. The role of RHAs in monitoring drugs on hand;
- viii. The significant size of the National Formulary;
- ix. The shortage of pharmaceuticals and non-pharmaceuticals;
- x. The status of the National Health Card System.

**View the Hearing**

The hearing can be viewed on our YouTube channel via the following link:

<https://youtu.be/Kr9NX-RL0kk>

**Contact the Committee's Secretary**

You may contact the Committee's Secretary at [jsclasasc@tparliament.org](mailto:jsclasasc@tparliament.org) or 624-7275 Ext. 2283

*Committees Unit*

*November 11<sup>th</sup> 2016*