



## HEALTH MANIFESTO

EMPOWERING OUR PEOPLE THROUGH  
ACCESSIBLE & AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE



Grenada Empowerment Movement  
strives to:

1. Restore the core values of the health care system.
2. Improve access to primary healthcare.
3. Reallocate pertinent resources to primary healthcare, as well as improve the primary healthcare infrastructure.
4. Invest in staff through adequate training and recruitment, as well as invest in pertinent medical equipment and accessories.
5. Review then upgrade existing health legislation and establish avenues for reporting discrepancies.
6. Increase access to mental health services.
7. Promote health awareness.
8. Provide subsidized healthcare for the elderly, low income households and single parents.
9. Establish sound networks with regional and international health sectors.



## FOREWORD

GEM affirms Healthcare is a basic human right!



The health sector of our Tri – Island State continues to face serious challenges, many of which could be resolved with better leadership, knowledge and organizational structure. Health stands among the most valuable assets any country can possess. Ironically though, insufficient emphasis has been placed on such an important sector by the majority of ruling administrations to date. It is quite obvious that a healthy nation means greater chances for increased productivity and subsequent improvement of our economy. Any government with sound vision will certainly prioritize healthcare as part of their long-term economic growth strategy.

Over the years, our population has been plagued by a general decline in the quality of services offered at the nation's healthcare facilities. We've experienced a surge in the overwhelming burden faced by our health sector, for example the Accident and Emergency Department of the General

Hospital. Careful analysis of this dilemma would reveal its root causes as poor management and allocation of health resources, coupled with the failure of our governing bodies to stimulate the development of both primary and secondary healthcare. The result of this has been a downward spiral of our health sector.

Proper understanding of our health sector, appropriate resource allocation as well as stimulation of academic growth and training for medical professionals are just a few of the areas of serious concern. The general election cannot come soon enough! Our people have lost all hope in the restoration of our health sector. Nevertheless, we stand united and proud as a new empowerment movement knowing that we possess the keys and mindset necessary to take our health sector forward.

By implementing the requisite objectives set out in our manifesto, we are certain that our people will see the changes that they once envisioned.

## INTRODUCTION

As the general election approaches, we expect to see quite a number of manifestos emerging. The question is, "Are we ready for real change with objective goals or would we continue to believe in empty promises to which we have been chronically exposed?" **We need a real, functional healthcare system. We cannot afford to continue risking the future of our people's health by allowing our governing bodies to experiment with healthcare leadership, especially when we are equipped with young, motivated healthcare professionals willing to take up the mantle of true leadership in health.**

## RESTORATION OF THE CORE VALUES OF THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Public Health Care is governed by sacred values. These include the fulfillment of the health needs of everyone within our tri island state and the provision of free health care based upon clinical needs without bias or primary focus on the financial aspect of patient care. Grenada Empowerment Movement affirms that in recent years we have seen a decline in the competence of individuals who develop the policies governing our health sector. This has directly impacted on the delivery of services at facilities as well as the level of professionalism and empathy displayed by some of our healthcare professionals. We intend to correct this disturbing trend by hiring ethical individuals to make decisions that would positively affect the healthcare system. By so doing, public confidence in the health sector will soon be restored.

## IMPROVEMENT OF ACCESS TO PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

Our country has experienced a deterioration of access to primary healthcare over the last several years, mainly resulting from reduced budgetary allocations to the health sector. As a result of this, we have seen a drastic increase in the number of patients seeking attention at the Accident and Emergency Department (A&E) of our main healthcare facility. This phenomenon has further aggravated and overwhelmed the A&E, resulting in an exponential increase in patient dissatisfaction. With improved access to primary healthcare, we expect to see better results and higher rates of patient satisfaction. This signifies that medical stations, health centers and rural hospitals will be thoroughly equipped with adequate staffing and better shift/call systems that would cater for our citizens.

## REALLOCATION OF PERTINENT HEALTH RESOURCES TO PRIMARY HEALTHCARE AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE QUALITY OF HEALTHCARE INFRASTRUCTURE

The establishment of surgical units along with the promotion of better emergency facilities and equipment at the primary healthcare level are two of the major priorities of the Grenada Empowerment Movement. A long-awaited project of this nature would significantly reduce the burden and volume of patient visits to the General Hospital, as well as increase patient satisfaction. We also intend to improve the quality of services offered at the General Hospital by putting several measures in place.

To begin with, we believe that improving the comfort levels of patients will certainly help to alleviate their suffering and lessen the time taken to heal. Indoor passageways connecting all parts of the hospital are a must! It is simply unacceptable for patients to be subjected to elements of the weather while moving from one part of the hospital to another, or even for medical procedures to be delayed because of the same reason. In the interim, we intend to ensure that all outdoor passageways are smoothly paved.

Additionally, we understand that prevention is better than cure and there is a concern that patients sometimes develop new infections during their stay at healthcare facilities. Better sanitation must be provided. Furthermore, we will ensure that all staff receive training on the importance of sanitation in preventing patient-to-patient transmission of pathogens along with basic sanitation procedures. Monitoring will be implemented (e.g.) regular checks at various sites to certify that microbial levels are kept within safe limits.

Grenada Empowerment Movement also recognizes the importance of friends and family in the healing and recovery of hospitalized patients. We intend to capitalize on this by expanding visiting hours, especially since loved ones usually assist nurses with feeding and bathing patients. In addition, greater emphasis will be placed on patients' nutritional needs when menus are prepared. Our intention is to have at least three options for every meal and inform patients of these one day in advance so they could determine if it will be necessary to request food from family and friends beforehand. We believe that fruits and nutritious snacks must be made available for patients as well and meals should be served on time. Breakfast, being the most important meal of the day, should be served by 7:30a.m.

In hospital wards, we would ensure that patients are grouped according to their respective levels of mobility. Grooming services must also be made available to patients, along with avenues for recreation such as a gymnasium/rehabilitation centre, outdoor park, bedside TVs with headphones, Wifi and cell phone charging ports.

The Grenada Empowerment Movement will ensure that a fully functional food court with healthy options are available to staff, patients and the public at the General Hospital. This in turn will provide a means of employment while generating revenue for the hospital.

Lastly, we intend to increase the range of medications available for treatment. If medicines that family members are required to purchase are unavailable locally, the hospital will offer ordering and brokerage services to procure them in an efficient manner.

## INVESTMENT IN STAFF THROUGH ADEQUATE TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT, AS WELL AS IN PERTINENT MEDICAL EQUIPMENT AND ACCESSORIES

- Ongoing training of all health professionals and auxiliary staff, without bias. Training will include customer service, conflict resolution and general professional development. Recruitment of more health professionals is a must. These include nursing and medical staff. Likewise, GEM will ensure that health professionals on contract receive permanent positions within their workplace.

- Special training for hospital guards to ensure they are adequately certified to provide security services as well as assist with first aid administration.

- Recruitment of grief counsellors available for times of breaking bad news to patients and family members. This is an important objective since it helps families and patients to accept their conditions and to take the best decision with regards to coping.

- Retreat for staff and proper access to health care.

- Succession planning: involvement of retired health professionals in the training of younger staff members with the objective of facilitating ease of incorporation into the workplace and hence better work environment and overall productivity.

- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training and certification to first responders at the General Hospital, especially nurses, orderlies and other interested parties.

- Investment in medical tourism: as our health system begins to grow and flourish and as we begin to develop a better reputation in the health sector, we can attract visitors from regional and international countries who may be able to seek cheaper medical care at our facilities. In so doing, we may be able to generate revenue that can go towards improving infrastructures within the health sector.

- Establishment of a public dialysis unit: Our tri – Island state is plagued with high incidence and prevalence of end stage renal disease. Nevertheless, our health sector has not been able to acquire a fully functional public dialysis unit. Private dialysis services offered in Grenada are currently costly and many patients succumb to their illness due to lack of finance. GEM will ensure that fully functional dialysis units are available to the general public throughout the tri – island state.



- Reinstallation of bed buzzers.
- Better operating theatre management, which includes but is not limited to adequate staffing.
- Government-owned hospital shuttle. This will aid with parking issues, while making transportation to the hospital more convenient and affordable.
- Establishment of a Department of Nuclear Medicine to our Health sector: this includes the introduction of radiotherapy to the public health sector, as well as the introduction of CT scan (Computed tomography) and MRI (Magnetic resonance imaging) to the General Hospital.

## REVIEW THEN UPGRADE EXISTING HEALTH LEGISLATION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF CHANNELS FOR REPORTING DISCREPANCIES

Grenada Empowerment Movement believes that the general public must be made aware of hospital policies and procedures on a regular basis. This will be achieved through public sensitization forums, an updated website etc. We also support the development of a comprehensive Bill of Rights for patients and staff, along with Codes of Ethics for nurses, doctors etc. Appropriate disciplinary measures will be put in place to deal with noncompliance, along with monitoring procedures to guarantee the smooth governance and functioning of all healthcare facilities. Fortnightly reports on staff, facilities, medication stocks etc. will be required of all administrative personnel in the health sector.

## INCREASE ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Grenada Empowerment Movement realizes that insufficient attention has been given to mental health. In some instances, patients discharged from the Psychiatric Hospital have joined the homeless population of Grenada and resorted to crime for survival. In other cases, these patients have become victims of crime themselves and even abuse by members of the RGPF and the general public. This trend underscores the need for general awareness among the Grenadian population on the signs of mental illnesses. GEM's solution includes the following:

1. Active Promotion of Mental Health Awareness Month.
2. Suicide awareness hotline with welfare checks: suicide and attempted suicide have both been the topic of discussion for many years. As the incidence of these continue to increase, so too should our strategies to curb them. We cannot simply rely on family members and neighbors to assist with the identification of a suicidal citizen. We must provide the requisite algorithm by which our citizens can identify persons at risk and alert the necessary bodies set up to manage these cases. Psychological Services in collaboration with Social Services will play a leading role in ensuring that all credible threats receive welfare checks. Such welfare checks are fundamental for the establishment of causes and risks factors, and better help our experts to work along with our citizens at risk.
3. Training on mental health awareness to police officers and other first responders, as well as to the general public: the stigma associated with mental illness continues to plague our society. One of the main reasons for such phenomenon is the mere fact that most of our citizens are neither trained nor equipped with the necessary skills to deal with this issue. As with other illnesses, mental illness requires proper therapy. People coming into contact with mentally ill patients must be aware of basic training on how to safely handle such situations without discrimination or scorn. By implementing periodic training sessions, our citizens can become more empowered to manage any encounter with mentally ill patients.

4. Renovation and restoration of our Psychiatric Hospital: Mental health is one of the most important issues with which we are currently faced, yet very little emphasis is placed on this area of the health sector. Our Psychiatric hospital has deteriorated over the past few years, and is now in dire need of restoration and renovation of the facility. Likewise, a boost in staffing and professional training for staff are of utmost importance. Staff will receive training in appropriate restraining procedures as well as insurance compensation for any injuries sustained on the job. The ratio of security guards to patients will be maintained according to international standards and guards will also be adequately trained and certified. Finally, proper follow-up treatment would be made available for discharged patients to ensure a smooth return to their everyday lives. GEM will ensure that the aforementioned objectives are achieved, while remaining open to suggestions from the public.

## PROMOTE PUBLIC HEALTH AWARENESS

1. Promotion of health fairs and community screening throughout the tri – island state: many citizens are witnesses to the value of health fairs. Some can also attest to the fact that the diagnosis of a particular disease occurred at a health fair. Nevertheless, the holding of health fairs and community screening continue to be headed by private and charitable organizations rather than by our government. The Grenada Empowerment Movement will adopt a greater and more active role in the promotion of health fairs and community screening. Volunteer opportunities for medical practitioners will be available during these health fairs.
2. First aid training to the public: as part of our empowerment strategies through health, the Grenada Empowerment Movement will also incorporate and introduce frequent and thorough first aid training to citizens throughout the tri-island state of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. This objective not only prepares our communities for major disasters, but also instills a sense of security among our citizens and our visitors, knowing that we are better prepared in cases of emergencies.
3. Improve environmental health services: many illnesses can be prevented by eliminating the vectors that spread them. Regular fogging for mosquitos and environmentally friendly ways to destroy pests are some of the strategies that will be utilized to reduce the spread of disease.



## FOCUS ON SUBSIDIZED HEALTH PLANS FOR THE ELDERLY, LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS AND SINGLE PARENTS

Three of the most vulnerable groups within our tri – island state include our elderly, our single parents and our low income households. Sadly, we are usually greeted with the harsh reality of encountering a combination of these three groups; for example, a low income household headed by a single mother or an elderly citizen with little or no income to get through the week. The Grenada Empowerment Movement is fully aware of these realities and objective plans are currently being prepared to counteract these problems.

Our belief is that health should not be subsidized based upon political affiliation, nor with the intention to intimidate our citizens nor expose their business by breaking certain confidentiality protocols. Grenada Empowerment Movement will ensure that our vulnerable groups receive the necessary health support without having to worry about their confidential information falling into the hands of the wrong people. The establishment of our “Twilight Card for the Elderly” and our “GEM Card” for low income households and single parents are just a few of the many ways in which The Grenada Empowerment Movement will ensure that all vulnerable groups receive the health support that they need regardless of their political affiliations or beliefs.

Many of our vulnerable citizens are hesitant to approach our ministries and ministers for the needed assistance because of the fear of reproach and backlash. The Grenada Empowerment Movement will change such perceptions.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF SOUND HEALTH NETWORKS WITH REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL HEALTH SECTORS

All too often, our people are victims of the end product of lack of established health networks with regional and international health sectors. Our tri – island state, as with all other sovereign states worldwide, relies on bilateral relationship with other countries. Due to lack of proper algorithms and proper health agreements with regional and international countries, we are sometimes faced with the nerve – wracking reality of watching our loved ones suffer and die without the opportunity to pursue treatment (not currently available in our tri- island state) abroad. By establishing such agreements with other countries, both regionally and internationally, we can guarantee more health security for our people.



**VOTE**



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