

## Foreword



Senator the Honourable Jerome Walcott  
Minister of Health

**Post Independence Barbados** has been an era in which we have witnessed significant improvements in the health status of our people. The burden of infectious and parasitic diseases, as well as nutritional deficiencies, have been reduced to the extent that our epidemiological profile is now similar to that of a developed country.

Good health has been an important factor in the socio-economic development of our people. An improved quality of life has contributed to lifestyle changes, which ironically now present us with some of our greatest challenges to date. Our people are living longer and concomitantly, there is an increasing prevalence of chronic degenerative diseases.

One of our major challenges will be to place greater emphasis on prevention and the maintenance of healthy lifestyles. Health Promotion will be at the core of a new approach that will seek to strengthen the role of the people, both individually and collectively, in the delivery of health services.

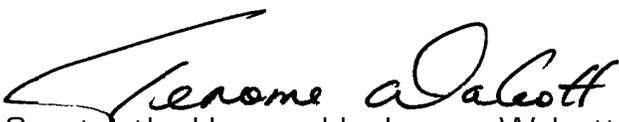
Another critical challenge will be to restructure our financing mechanisms in order to ensure that we can sustain, during this millennium, the levels of care that Barbadians have grown to enjoy over the years.

This Strategic Plan charts the course for the health system to address the challenges we currently face. It is the result of collaboration involving all stakeholders, both within and beyond the public sector.

The Government of Barbados remains committed to investing resources to improve the health and well being of all Barbadians. The Government of Barbados and its partners will continue to enhance the nation's investment through wise programme and resource utilisation decisions that get the most for the funds available.

The challenge is one for all of us: for Barbados as a nation. Together, we will make it happen. All key stakeholders have pledged commitment to the Plan. These include Government, the private sector and non-governmental organisations, communities and individuals across Barbados.

I invite all of you to join me as we take this new path for health in Barbados.

  
Senator the Honourable Jerome Walcott

## Acknowledgements

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The Ministry gratefully acknowledges the ongoing support from its primary collaborators, including other agencies of Government, the Pan American Health Organization, particularly, for its guidance throughout the process, and the European Commission for its support of the National Consultation held in September 2002 at the Sherbourne Conference Centre.

Special acknowledgments are in order for those persons who participated in the National Consultation and whose verbal presentations or written submissions contributed to the development of the Plan. The list of organisations that participated in the National Consultation is at Appendix 1.

The Ministry also acknowledges those persons who worked untiringly to finalise the Plan, including its formatting, editing, proof reading and printing.