



**Summary of Proceedings
Public Hearing**

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

Held on Friday November 11th, 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 or 624-7275 Ext. 2283

Committees Unit

November 11th 2016