



Matters Of Substance

Vol. 4. Issue #2 April - July 2019

Quarterly Newsletter of the National Council on Substance Abuse

Release Of Report For The Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (seventh round)

Submitted by: Mrs. Betty Hunte, Manager, NCSA and Mrs. Laura Foster, Research Assistant, NCSA.

The Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) is the tool designed and used by the Organization of American States (OAS), through their Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), to assess the progress made by member states in addressing the global drug problem and related issues. The just concluded Seventh Round of the MEM focused on the period 2014-2018.

The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) continues to be the local coordinator for the MEM process, with the Council's Manager, Mrs. Betty Hunte, serving as part of the Governmental Expert Group (GEG) during the Seventh Round. This Group is comprised of experts from across the Demand Reduction and Supply Control Sectors and is responsible for reviewing countries' completed evaluation instruments and preparing the final evaluation reports. The Council's Research Assistant, Mrs. Laura Foster, served as Barbados' National Coordinating Entity (NCE) for the Round and as part of her duties, was responsible for the completion of Barbados' evaluation instrument, which included gathering the necessary responses and supporting documents from stakeholders.

Data collection for the Seventh Round

took place between March and April, 2018. The arduous review and report writing phase ensued in the months that followed, culminating with the official release of Country Reports on July 3, 2019. It should be noted that, in an effort to ensure the objectivity of the evaluation exercise, no experts are involved in the assessment of their own country.

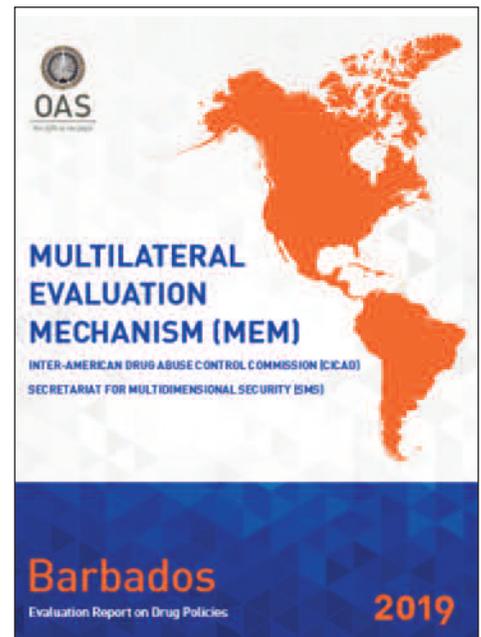
Barbados' Report focusses on the island's responses to the drug problem and related crimes within the context of CICAD's Hemispheric Plan of Action on Drugs (2016-2020). It also includes an analysis of Barbados' progress in the area of drug control since the inception of the MEM in 1999.

According to the Report, some of Barbados' achievements by thematic area are as follows:

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING:

CICAD expresses with satisfaction that in the Seventh Round (2014-2018), Barbados had the National Anti-Drug Plan 2015-2020. Between the first and sixth rounds (1999-2014), the country did not have a national drug plan or strategy.

DEMAND REDUCTION: CICAD notes with satisfaction that in the Seventh Round (2014-2018), Barbados progressed in having an accreditation process for treatment centers.



SUPPLY REDUCTION: CICAD takes into account that no significant areas of illicit crops have been detected in Barbados. CICAD notes with satisfaction that during the Seventh Round (2014-2018), Barbados designed, implemented and updated national programs and policies to prevent and decrease illicit crops and the illicit production of drugs.

CONTROL MEASURES: CICAD is pleased to see that Barbados has updated diagnoses or studies to identify new trends and threats on drug trafficking and related crimes.



Foreword

Ms. Jennifer Baptiste – Junior Programme Officer, NCSA.

Since the 1950's, smoking was the epitome of cool and glamour. As such, many may confess to rolling a piece of paper or picking up the butts from discarded cigarettes to smoke. Smoking was the “in thing to do” and proof that you were a “man” or a “woman”. Of course, this was always done in secret - but if the adults you sought to emulate caught you in the act, then you would be disciplined severely with whatever came to hand. Nowadays, there is no need for youngsters to smoke in secrecy because “fanta” (wild tobacco) and loose cigarettes are sold openly on almost every street corner and village shop.

Despite the U.S. Surgeon General's and Barbados Minister of Health warning about the harmful effects of tobacco, smoking is still very popular. Extensive research states that smoking the tobacco causes diminished health including cardiovascular disease, lung cancer, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and stroke. Smoking not only poses health risks to the smoker but secondhand smoke causes numerous health problems in infants and children; including more frequent and severe asthma attacks, respiratory infections, ear infections, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). According to the World Health Organization (WHO) “the tobacco epidemic is one of the biggest public health threats the world

has ever faced, killing more than 8 million people a year.

More than 7 million of those deaths are the result of direct tobacco use while around 1.2 million are the result of non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke”.

With the introduction of new delivery systems like e-cigarettes and vapourizers, young people are becoming more attracted to using these trendy devices instead of traditional cigarettes. These are often perceived as being a “healthier” alternative to smoking cigarettes since the literature suggests that they have less side effects and risks for the respiratory system. However, nicotine, which is a highly addictive substance, is found in both regular cigarettes and e-cigarettes. Furthermore, using nicotine, especially during adolescence and young adulthood, can cause harm to the parts of the brain responsible for attention, mood and impulse control.

This issue of “Matters of Substance” focuses on the health risks associated with smoking. As we recognize “World No Tobacco Day” on May 31 we are also advocating that every day should be a no tobacco day, as we seek, through education, to protect the health of our citizens from the harmful effects of smoking. 

References: www.cdc.gov.bb/tobacco
www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco

Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism

Continued from page 1

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: CICAD notes with satisfaction that the country updated legislation and procedural frameworks allowing for effective cooperation mechanisms with other countries and organizations on forfeiture and management of assets derived from drug trafficking and related crimes.

In addition, the Report also identified, among others, the following areas for development:

DEMAND REDUCTION: CICAD views with concern that the country has not carried out any impact evaluation of its programs. Barbados also does not have coordination mechanisms in prevention programs allowing the participation of key stakeholders.

SUPPLY REDUCTION: The country also does not prepare or update studies or research on the medical and scientific uses and other legal uses of crops containing narcotic or psychotropic substances subject to the international control system.

CONTROL MEASURES: CICAD notes with concern that the country does not have an Early Warning System to identify and trace New Psychoactive Substances, amphetamine-type stimulants, or other substances subject to international control. There is also no regulatory framework to identify and address the challenges posed by the onset these substances.

As can be seen, the Report presents an overview of achievements and identifies areas which require more effort in our response to the drug challenge. The final component of the Seventh Round process will be the release of a Hemispheric Report later in 2019. 

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The Vaping Phenomena

Submitted by: Mr. Brian Payne, Drug Education Officer (Secondary Schools), NCSA

Vaping is a growing fad or habit throughout the world, so it is important that we take a close look at this phenomenon. It is sometimes referred to as “juuling” because Juul is a popular e-cigarette brand among teenagers.

What is Vaping?

Vaping is the act of inhaling and exhaling the aerosol, often referred to as vapour, which is produced by an e-cigarette.

What is an electronic or E-Cigarette (EC)?

An electronic cigarette is a hand-held electronic device that simulates the experience of smoking a cigarette. It works by heating a liquid which generates an aerosol or vapour that is inhaled by the user.



Image depicts an assortment of vaping devices.

What type of vaping devices are there?

Vaping devices include not just e-cigarettes, but also Advanced Personal Vaporisers (APV's) or vape pens, and vape Mods. E-cigarettes look like regular ('analog') cigarettes. Some of the popular brands are

Vuze and Blu. In vape shops, you will also find Advanced Personal Vaporisers (APVs), also known as vape pens and vape mods. APVs contain electronics allowing the user to regulate the power level and produce a moderate amount of vapor.

four ingredients: (1) vegetable glycerine (VG), (2) propylene glycol (PG), (3) flavourings - these can be natural or artificial and (4) pharmaceutical-grade nicotine, available in various nicotine strengths or zero nicotine. It must be mentioned that vaping cannabis is also growing in popularity.



The “Juul” vaping device which resembles a USB stick.

Vape Mods are larger devices than e-cigarettes and are known for their high vapor production. This kind of device takes its cue from a regular vape pen but it is enhanced or modified (hence the ‘Mod’ name) to include certain advanced features.

What are e-liquids or e-juices?

These generally consist of

What are the benefits of vaping?

Some people prefer vaping over smoking because it has less side effects and risks for the respiratory system. Smoke can irritate the lungs, cause allergies and lead to the symptoms of chronic bronchitis (specifically chronic coughing and phlegm). Vaping, on the other hand, is much easier on the respiratory system. E-cigarettes primarily contain propylene glycol and vegetable glycerine, neither of which is known to pose serious risks when inhaled. Many studies, including some quoted

in the 2015 Public Health England (PHE) publication, support the view that electronic cigarettes are safer and can help people to quit smoking and reduce their cigarette consumption. There is also evidence in this report that e-cigarettes can encourage a reduction in cigarette consumption even among those not intending to quit or those rejecting other support methods. These studies also stated that in England, e-cigarettes are much more popular than other stop - smoking medications among those trying to stop tobacco smoking. So, there is much evidence that vaping is being used not only as a harm reduction method but also as a means of quitting smoking.

What are the dangers associated with vaping?

Although evidence indicates that vaping is less harmful than smoking, it cannot be concluded that vaping is completely safe. There is currently no long-term evidence on the risks of vaping but we do know enough to conclude that it would not be entirely safe. For example, vaping can be irritating to the lungs and this could lead to health problems after long-term use. Other adverse effects reported so far are irregular heartbeats, fainting, dizziness and reduced immunity. Additionally, although the levels of harmful chemicals in vapor are very low compared to smoke, there are still harmful chemicals present. Also, vaping nicotine and marijuana is still potentially addictive.

The Royal College of Physicians’ report from England points out that vape pen flavours are the most plausible source of risks from vaping. For example, diacetyl is a buttery flavouring chemical used in sweet e-juices from some companies, and this has been linked to lung disease in people exposed to large quantities over a

long period of time. Most flavourings have not been tested for risks when inhaled, so even though most probably would not be like diacetyl, the potential for risk is there.

There are also warnings of the possibility of a vaporiser malfunctioning and causing injury if misused.

How popular is vaping?

According to the latest statistics from the World Health Organisation (WHO), there has been a small but steady decrease in the



E-cigarette and E-juice which is the flavoured liquid that is used in the E-cigarette.

estimated number of smokers globally since 2000 – from 1.14 billion then to about 1.1 billion now. The opposite is true for vaping. The number of vapers has been increasing rapidly – from about 7 million in 2011 to 35 million in 2016. Market research group, Euromonitor, estimates that the number of adults who vape will reach almost 55 million by 2021.

Is vaping legal in Barbados?

Vaping is legal in Barbados for adults. It is illegal for minors (those below 18) to use or sell tobacco products. According to a 2017 amendment to the Health Services Act of Barbados (Cap. 44), tobacco products include electronic smoking devices.

The Prohibition of Tobacco Smoking in

Public Places, Regulation 2010, also covers emissions from electronic smoking devices.

CONCLUSION

The evidence is showing that vaping is not as damaging to the respiratory system as smoking and that it is increasingly being used by many as a means of quitting or reducing their tobacco smoking.

Should this situation lead us to conclude that vaping is safe and should be encouraged? Not at all. There is enough evidence showing that there are some known harms and warnings and that, being a relatively “new” phenomenon, enough is not known of the possible long-term dangers and risks that future findings may uncover.

Added to this is the fact that any mind altering substance, like marijuana, whether smoked or vaped, can temporarily alter one’s consciousness and mood and can impair judgement. Impaired judgement is

responsible for high levels of mental, physical and social problems in this world.

For those involved in the area of primary and universal prevention, the message is clear – vaping is not worth the risks. All should be encouraged, regardless of age, to engage themselves in safer, healthier and more wholesome activities or practices. 

“It is impossible to escape the impression that people commonly use false standards of measurement - that they seek power, success and wealth for themselves and admire them in others, and that they underestimate what is of true value in life.”
- Sigmund Freud

International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

The celebration of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking was established by the UN in 1987, to emphasize the need for strengthening actions in support of an international community free of drugs, in all countries. "Listen first" was the theme used for last year's International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, which is observed each 26th of June. The campaign included the recommendation of "listening to children and young people" as "the first step to help them grow healthy and safe, decreasing risk behaviors and drug use".

"Listen first" was the campaign developed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), to promote evidence - based universal prevention programmes, favoring communication in various contexts, such as family, school or health services. In the region of the Americas, Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, are participating in this initiative.

The Pan American Health Organization, at the regional and country level, and through alliances with strategic partners, is strengthening national capacities for the

development, implementation and evaluation of health and drugs policies, promoting the integration of care in health networks, to improve the access and quality of services. On International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, PAHO ratified its commitment to accompany and support Member States to achieve the UNGASS 2016 agreed health recommendations, in pursuit of a comprehensive and balanced approach on the drug problem in the region of the Americas.

Public health dimension of the world drug problem

Drug use, drug use disorders and related health conditions are major public health concerns. Addressing the world drug problem

is essential for promoting health, and peaceful and inclusive societies, and realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Member States of the region of the Americas must face enormous challenges in relation to the use of psychoactive substances, especially among the youth, such as the prevention of use, access to quality treatment, the

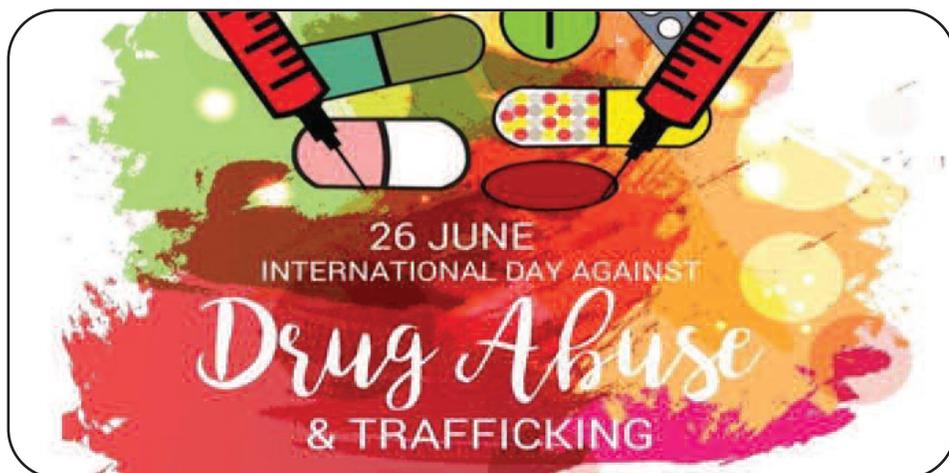
management of emerging issues relating to new substances or the epidemic of adverse effects by the abuse of opiates, among others. At the special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGASS), devoted to the world drug problem, the importance of addressing this problem from a comprehensive and balanced approach was stressed. It was recognized that the respect for human rights is vital to protect the health and welfare of humankind. Everyone has the right to drug



treatment and care. Not as an "addict", nor as a "drug user" - but as a human being. The public health strategies and the health sector have an important role in mitigating drug-related harms at all levels.

Health workers can have a positive influence on children and youth, identify risky behavior and intervene timely, simply and effectively. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) signed a memorandum of understanding, to assist countries in the implementation of the health related recommendations of the UNGASS.

The theme "Listen first" was recommended to encourage caregivers to listen to children and young people as the first step to help them grow healthy and safe. 



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Tobacco and the User - Friend or Foe

Submitted by: Mrs. Michelle Daniel, Chief Executive Officer, Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados Inc.

“Before you can break out of prison, you must realize that you are locked up” - Leo Tolstoy

For as long as I can remember, we have been hearing that smoking and tobacco inhalation are not good for us humans, and yet many persons continue to mindlessly explore the options that smoking presents to them or that they think it presents to them. At a very basic and mundane level, some think it looks cool; others think it's just ‘something to do’ and yet others find it a useful mechanism to cope with the challenges of life: “I need to have a smoke”. But, to what end?

Some of us are aware that there is a Barbados Strategic Plan for Non-Communicable Diseases (Barbados NCD Map 2015-2019). This plan serves as a guide and roadmap for non-communicable disease prevention and control activities, not only for Government but for the private sector and civil society organizations. It can be debated whether or not the plan is sufficiently active and treats to the average man on the street who is a tobacco user. What we can say is that many collaborations and initiatives started prior to, and arose out of, the development of this strategy and these are ongoing, e.g. The Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC). But let's focus on the title of this article “Tobacco & the User – Friend or Foe” and rein in the theory to make this a very practical contribution.

What is a non-communicable disease? Why all the noise and clamour? What does tobacco have to do with it? Let's make it really simple. By definition, a non-



communicable disease (NCD) is a disease that is not infectious or transmissible, so cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases are NCDs. and tobacco...is a primary risk factor which contributes to the appearance, existence and prevalence of non-communicable diseases in human beings. The connection? Basically, if a user stops smoking, I am confident that he/she will reduce the probability of developing a NCD by more than 90%. There is research to suggest this.

Having and maintaining a healthy lifestyle is perhaps the MOST important preventive strategy. Essential to this is the reduction of exposure, which you and I, as individuals have, to those contributors to NCDs – excessive salt intake, alcohol... tobacco!

There are several listed contributory factors to NCDs. What's at the top of the list? Once again, tobacco use, then unhealthy diet and physical inactivity, and the misuse of alcohol. Making a compelling

case for persons to recognise the pitfalls of the foregoing and levitating them into action is therefore part of a global mandate: a fight.

This is not merely a matter of producing erudite essays for research. The negative results of the over-use of tobacco and its abuse and the impact of non-communicable diseases are real and destructive. This is at a global level, yet touches the average man in the street. It means that, with the pull (pun intended) so strong, the average tobacco user cannot fight the battle on his/her own. The fight has to be at the level of the family, of the community and at the heart of the nation.

In Barbados, legislation banning smoking in public spaces was enacted in 2010. Has this action been impactful in realizing the desired changes in behavior? Passing of legislation is but one microscopic aspect. Tobacco is a multi-billion-dollar industry globally, so has this stopped its use? **NO!** Other interventions include engaging and galvanizing the support of the comple-

mentary agencies and sectors in this fight, irrespective of whether or not it impacts the bottom line. A cash-strapped island need not be expending over 200 million dollars annually to support the reduction of NCDs. Those monies could and should be re-directed elsewhere to energize growth, not fight against death. In closing, there are:

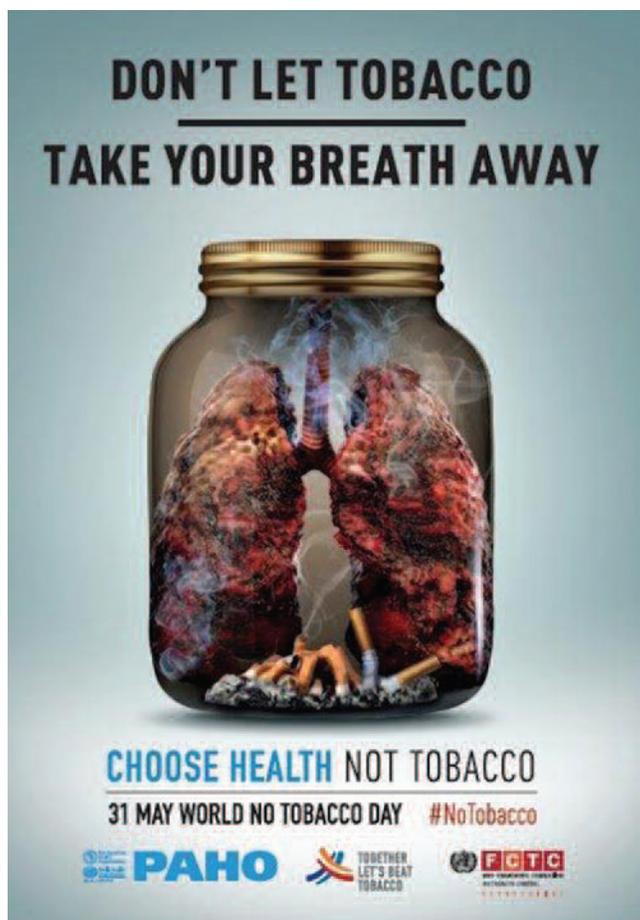
A Few Things You May Not Know or Have Chosen to Forget

- Smoking causes about 90% of all lung cancer deaths worldwide
- Cigarette smoking increases the risk of death in all cancers
- Smokers are at greater risk of developing a cardiovascular disease
- The very risk factors for NCDs, tobacco being one, often manifest themselves in people with mental disorders.
- It is not only the direct user who is affected. Second-hand smoke doubles the risk of having a heart attack.

If you are a tobacco user, save your life and improve your health and wellbeing, eliminate your use of tobacco TODAY! 

You decide...Tobacco Use: Friend or Foe?

“Would you like me to give you a formula for success? It’s quite simple, really: Double your rate of failure. You are thinking of failure as the enemy of success. But it isn’t at all. You can be discouraged by failure or you can learn from it, so go ahead and make mistakes. Make all you can. Because remember that’s where you will find success.” - Thomas J. Watson



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“Take it Easy” Media Campaign



Mr. Troy Wickham, Deputy Manager, NCSA presenting the overview of the “Take it Easy” campaign to staff and members of the media.

NCSA launched its media campaign “Take it Easy” to raise awareness about the use and abuse of alcohol. Edwin “The General” Yearwood has partnered with the NCSA for this initiative and composed the theme song “Take it Easy” for the campaign.

A number of activities have been planned for the month of July, in an effort to sensitize the public about the harms associated with abusing alcohol, especially during the Crop Over season. Some of the activities include: appearances on various social media platforms, radio stations 98.1 FM and 95.3 FM, the erection of banners to remind persons about the dangers of drinking and driving under the influence of alcohol as well as a mini road-side carnival with lots of “giveaways”. This year, the NCSA has partnered with Junior Chamber International (JCI) in their Safe & Sober Zone initiative and NCSA Programme Officers will be out and about at various events during the Crop Over season encouraging patrons to ‘Take it Easy’ in their consumption of alcoholic beverages. 

**#choosewisely #dontdrinkanddrive #arrivealive
#getadesignateddriver #gethomesafe**



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Mrs. Betty Hunte, Manager, NCSA, Ms. Ingrid Holder, Manager – Edwin Yearwood, Mr. Kevon Henry, NCSA Board Member, and Mr. Troy Wickham, Deputy Manager, NCSA.

TAKE IT EASY

*Left home for a good time, enjoying meself
I feeling so lucky, alive and ah blessed*

*So I stay far from trouble, living my own way
Be the same way tomorrow gonna be my day
Think twice now before you make a next move
Take it easy, (bubble on a sweet groove)
Come relax ya mind now for me
Settle down now take it easy
Think twice now before you make a next move
Take it easy, (bubble on a sweet groove)
Come relax ya mind now for me
Settle down now take it easy
Take it easyyyyyy
Take it easyyyyyy*

*No drinking and driving, just relax ya mind
That's not gonna break you
Let's make a great Lime*

*So I stay far from trouble, living my own way
Be the same way tomorrow gonna be my day
Think twice now before you make a next move
Take it easy, (bubble on a sweet groove)
Come relax ya mind now for me
Settle down now take it easy
Think twice now before you make a next move
Take it easy, (bubble on a sweet groove)
Come relax ya mind now for me
Settle down now take it easy*

*Take it easyyyyyy
Take it easyyyyyy
Take it easy*

NCSA Drug Awareness Week Activities

Heads of Department from 8 agencies joined the NCSA to sign Memoranda of Understanding for the Barbados Drug Information Network on June 26, 2019. The MOUs will formalize the reporting relationships and obligations of the agencies/departments that supply data for BARDIN, and are the product of a collaborative effort between the NCSA and all Network members. Participating agencies/departments include: The Psychiatric Hospital, The Substance Abuse Foundation, The Centre for Counselling Addiction and Support Alternatives, The Edna Nicholls Centre, The Royal Barbados Police Force, The Barbados Prison Service, The Financial Intelligence Unit, The Criminal Justice Research and Planning Unit.



Front row from left to right: Laura Foster (Research Assistant, NCSA), Betty Hunte (Manager, NCSA), Hadford Howell (Board Chairman, NCSA), Troy Wickham (Deputy Manager, NCSA). **Back row from left to right:** Jonathan Yearwood (Research & Information Officer, NCSA), Anthony Holder (Head of Rehabilitation, Barbados Prison Service), Shelley Nicholls-Hunte (Director, Financial Intelligence Unit), Debra Hewitt (Programme Coordinator, the Edna Nicholls Centre), Angela Sealy (Clinical Director, the Substance Abuse Foundation), Brian Maclachlan (Senior Consultant Psychiatrist, Psychiatric Hospital), Cheryl Willoughby (Director, the Criminal Justice Research and Planning Unit), Jennifer Maynard (Chairman, Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives)



Mrs. Betty Hunte, NCSA Manager, and Mrs. Shelley Nicholls-Hunte, Director of the Financial Intelligence Unit, signing the Memorandum of Understanding for the Barbados Drug Information Network.



Mrs. Betty Hunte, NCSA Manager, and Ms. Angela Sealy, Clinical Director at the Substance Abuse Foundation, signing the Memorandum of Understanding for the Barbados Drug Information Network.

NCSA Drug Awareness Week Activities



Mrs. Makeada Bourne, Community Programme Officer (NCSA) addressing students at the Coleridge and Pary Secondary School on the effects of marijuana use.



Mr. Brian Payne, Drug Education Officer (NCSA) performing his rhythm poetry "Calm Down" during the Anger Management session at the Coleridge and Pary Secondary School.



Mr. Troy Wickham, Deputy Manager, NCSA addressing the students at Wesley Hall Primary School during the morning devotion session.



NCSA Programme Officers conducting prayers at Wesley Hall Primary School as part of Drug Awareness Week.



Twenty-six social workers received their certificates of participation after successfully completing the NCSA's Drug Education Seminar which was held at the NCSA.