



## MONEY MAKES THE WORLD... SIT STILL

We've all heard the song, 'money makes the world go round', and we know how true it rings. But there's plenty of truth in observing that it can also make a population sedentary, obese and very, very ill. That is one of the main ails of our times: we've

eaten and sat ourselves into an expensive black hole of preventable diseases. And now we can no longer afford to pay for it. Combine this with the fact that we're living waaaaay longer and, voila, we have a \$25 million dollar short-fall in the Ministry of Health and Senior's budget. To be clear, though, there are

other factors: advances in medical technology and our cultural belief that more tests = better care, and the effect is magnified. The upcoming year will be a tough one for health financing, but they say necessity is the mother of all invention. This will be a year of innovation in health system solutions.

## IMMUNIZATION LEVELS

It takes a village to raise a child and it takes a community effort to ensure diseases like measles and polio do not return to Bermuda. Thanks to data from our community and public health professionals, the Child Health section in the Department of Health (DoH) can report that 94% of our infant population is vaccinated against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio and haemophilus type b influenza, and 95% for PCV13 (13 types of pneumococcal bacteria). These results are fantastic! Unfortunately, our reports

also show we do less well in uptake in measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccines for toddlers. For the first round of MMR, there was reported a 87% vaccination coverage rate, but the second MMR shot drops to a vaccination rate of 66% by the age of 5 years. Without immunization levels of 95% or above, Bermuda is at risk for these diseases coming back. The DoH needs your support to increase coverage. Health professionals can submit timely information about vaccines and parents can ensure their children are vaccinated. To find-out more about the vaccine schedules



Photo Credit: The Centre for Disease Control (CDC)

visit: <https://www.gov.bm/immunization-schedules-children-and-adults>.

## ENHANCED CARE PILOT

The Health Insurance Department has partnered with three health providers and enrolled 40 clients, so far, in an Enhanced Care Programme pilot. The goal is to coordinate the primary care of patients with non-communicable diseases eg. diabetes to reduce emergency room visits and improve the health of the most vulnerable.

## EMERGENCY PLANNING

Polio, a disease near elimination, remains a "public health emergency of international concern" according to WHO. Bermuda, like other countries, completed and submitted a Polio Response Plan as part of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) requirements for country preparedness. The plan identifies resources and procedures for public health officials. With the global community we live-in, we must be prepared for all possibilities.

## HEALTH QUERIES

Bermuda's health system is not easy to navigate. We often hear entirely reasonable queries of "how to I do such and such?", "where can I get xyz?", "who can I tell something bad happened?" For those who work in the system the answers aren't always immediately at hand as the system is complex. To try to help, we have updated our website to include a guide to address queries we hear often. Visit the site and we hope you find what you're looking for! <https://www.gov.bm/who-contact-about-services-our-health-system>

