

### **Voices on Childhood Obesity Prevention Increasing**

The voices calling for a strong national school nutrition policy continue to increase as more civil society organisations are joining the Barbados Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition. The Coalition is a cross-section of health-based and non-health civil society organisations (CSOs) and concerned individuals.

The most recent members include The Barbados National Council of Parent Teachers Associations; The Kiwanis Clubs of Barbados; The Girl Guides Association of Barbados, the Barbados Boy Scouts Association, The Barbados Association of Endometriosis and PCOS; The Barbados Physical Therapy Association and The Barbados Rugby Football Union.

Now in its second year of existence, the Coalition has a goal of advocating for the prevention of increasing rates of childhood obesity in Barbados via the implementation of World Health Organisation (WHO) evidence-based policy actions and public education.

Mr. Suleiman Bulbulia, Chairperson of the Coalition contends, “The Coalition has, over the last few months, proven the immense value and advantage of working together in pursuit of a common goal that benefits all.” Speaking about how the Coalition started, Bulbulia explained, “What started off as the voice of a few concerned groups and individuals, is now transformed into a growing Coalition in pursuit of sensitizing the Barbadian public to the very clear and present danger posed by the startling increases in childhood obesity, and in advocating for policies that will seek to reverse this negative trend.”

Vice President of the Barbados Association of Endometriosis and PCOS (Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome), Dr. Rashida Daisley, explained that her association is very pleased to join the fight against childhood obesity. She contended, “Childhood obesity remains a national public health threat with significant immediate and long-term implications and the current and future work of the Coalition to mitigate against this threat is invaluable.” She noted that PCOS which is a complex reproductive/metabolic condition, has an intricate, cyclical relationship with obesity.”

The Girl Guides Association of Barbados has also added its voice to the Coalition with a membership of 3,000 young girls across the island. According to the Head of that Association, Ms. Nadia Skeete, “The Girl Guides Association of Barbados welcomes the opportunity to be a member of the Barbados Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition, simply because we are aware of the importance of educating children in prioritising being health conscious.” She further added, “This invaluable knowledge will impact positively on the girls’ health and wellness and would also assist in their lobbying for others to do the same.” Moreover, the Girl Guides leader highlighted that the partnership with the Coalition will help to cement the knowledge of the importance of health and wellness gained when their young charges engage in the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts’ initiatives and badges dealing with the same, such as Girl Powered Nutrition and the WHO Nutrition Challenge Badges.”

Barbados Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition  
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Officially launched in May 2018, the Coalition now comprises twenty-three (23) CSOs, thirty-five (35) individual members and a Youth Sub-Committee with just over twenty (20) youth advocates.

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