



## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Heart & Stroke Foundation Signs MOU with U-Report Barbados**

Two critical organisations involved in youth advocacy and the civil society movement in Barbados have formed a new partnership to advance both areas of key importance, these are the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Barbados Inc. and U-Report Barbados.

The partnership between the U-Report Barbados and The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados Inc. in association with the Barbados Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition will provide strategic opportunities for both entities with the main aim of building a platform for youth to share openly and freely and boost awareness about healthy choices and lifestyles. As a social messaging and data collection tool aimed at enhancing civic engagement among youth, U-Report Barbados collects data in real-time, through tailored polls from a limitless number of participants. The youth arm of the Barbados Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition, consists of youth advocates which, actively recruits members through school and community outreach initiatives will be key to these moments of collaboration, which will assist both entities in boosting membership, increasing social media engagement and reach as well as accumulating a larger number of youth participating in health-related polls.

Given the health of Barbadian children has been a major highlight of successive advocacy campaigns of the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados and more importantly the extremely alarming challenge in the increasing rate of childhood Obesity, this new partnership can accrue much for the childhood obesity programme. The alarming rate of childhood obesity has been underscored by medical professionals, researchers, advocates and the civil society, all pointing to the need for government to implement a suite of World Health Organisation recommended policies which can transform this concerning trend.

With the aim of more advocacy efforts, the scope of partnership between U-Report Barbados and The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados Inc. in association with The Barbados Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition will include:

1. Collaboration in various outreach activities targeting youth to build national awareness of the HSFB Childhood Obesity Prevention Campaign and U-Report Barbados
2. Creation of Polls on topics such health, wellness, nutrition, policy and other areas of relevance
3. Design of a targeted communications and advocacy campaign on poll themes and activities
4. Access to youth ambassador networks for the dissemination of information and facilitation of joint sensitization sessions

Project Coordinator for U-Report Barbados, Firhaana Bulbulia said, “The MOU will seek to elevate youth voices especially in relation to health-related issues in Barbados. It is integral that our decisions and campaigns are driven by sound data. As such UREPORT provides an excellent platform for youth to add their voices to issues of importance.” CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Mrs. Michelle Daniel opined, “We are delighted that this collaboration will be used for greater engagement, not only of the wider public but of the youth, and how we engage for the benefit of the youth, so we understand what the youth are saying and that can redound to better programming.”

### **About the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados**

The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados Inc. is a non-profit organisation registered under the Companies Act 1982 of Barbados registration number 269 and under the Charities Act 1979-2 registration number 82. The Foundation was founded in 1985 as the Heart Foundation of Barbados and in 2006 embraced stroke to become the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados. Its Childhood Obesity Prevention (COP) Programme supports obesity prevention through mass media campaigns for increased awareness of the harms of sugary drinks and promotion of policy change.

For further information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

Stacia Browne

Communications Officer

The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados

Tel: (246) 232-5002

Email: [communicationsofficer@hsfbarbados.com](mailto:communicationsofficer@hsfbarbados.com)