

Barbados Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition  
**For Immediate Release**

Monday September 11<sup>th</sup> 2023

### **Long Standing Voice for Childrens' health Elected as Chair of the BCOP Coalition**

A name synonymous with childrens' health in Barbados for over 3 decades, has now taken the helm of the Barbados Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition (BCOP Coalition) for the year 2023 to 2024.

Professor Anne St. John, a Consultant Pediatrician, a children's health advocate and the Lead Policy Champion for the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Barbados and the BCOP Coalition, was elected Chairperson at a Coalition Workshop on Wednesday September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

The BCOP Coalition has a membership of 30 civil society organisations, in addition to individual members and youth advocates, all with the singular goal of advocating for the suite of policies, identified by the World Health Organization to decrease the alarming levels of childhood obesity, in countries like Barbados. Currently 31% of children in Barbados are obese or overweight.

On being elected to her new post, Professor Anne said, "I am humbled to have been elected to the position of Chair of the BCOP Coalition, being quite aware that it carries a tremendous sense of purpose with high expectations, towards the accomplishment the goals set by the organization, in relation to healthy nutrition and lifestyles, especially related to children of the nation."

Professor Anne has been a very hands-on advocate and champion for childhood obesity prevention from the beginning of the Childhood Obesity Prevention Project in 2018, sensitizing policymakers, parents, children, principals, teachers and staff at various schools around the island. Especially during the Covid-19 Pandemic, her voice and reasoning became linked to the School Nutrition Policy which has generated much interest across Barbados. Now, looking forward to the implementation of other evidence-based policies like the Octagonal Front of Package Warning Labels, which can simultaneously assist in reducing the levels of childhood obesity in Barbados, the new Coalition Chair, said, "The right to know what are the ingredients in what we consume, goes hand in hand with the adaptation, intervention, and use of Octagonal Front of Package Warning Labels (O-FOPWL) on consumables, assisting consumers in making healthy choices of food and drink."

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On the election of Professor Anne St. John as Chairperson of the Coalition, Programme Manager of the Childhood Obesity Prevention Project for HSFB, Mrs. Francine Charles, said, "It is truly an honour for the BCOP Coalition to be led by one of the most ardent voices for children's health in Barbados. Professor Anne has a passion and a voice to ensure children in Barbados have optimal health and we have watched her advocate effectively to every possible audience, so we are heartened to work with her as Chair of the Coalition."

-THE END-