

# HEALTH MATTERS



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## Message from the Chair



### Health Worker's Day 2020

On this special occasion Mrs. Patricia Rene, the chairperson of HPC had this special message:

"During this difficult and challenging time, the Health Professionals Council takes this opportunity to express its best wishes to all allied health professionals and other health workers on the occasion of World Health Workers Day. Despite it not being celebrated as per tradition, I want to show my sincere appreciation as it is clear that **YOU** are very devoted towards the work you are currently tasked with – pouring your hearts and sweat into ensuring that the population remains as safe as possible.

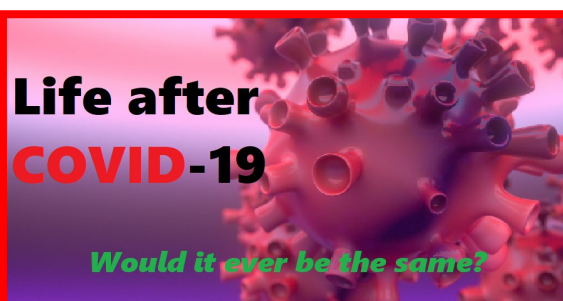
And for that we thank you. We want to extend you our encouragement and support; we are in this together. Yes, we believe there is light at the end of the tunnel. However, as we battle triumphantly may we display not only our leadership and workmanship but also our ethical responsibilities and professionalism. May together we shine bright as we tackle this pandemic with all our energy and strength. Together we can do this and together we will triumph."

## COVID 19: THE GAME CHANGER

Since mid-March, the country has been busy fighting the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19). The minute the initial cases were reported, health professionals have been in the forefront attempting their best to minimise the spread of the virus and protect the population. Their work schedules changed for them to adjust to their new realities.

To date, the country has reported ONLY 11 positive cases and for that we are grateful to the public health authorities, all the health professionals and volunteers who reacted promptly and rallied to help ensure the safety of our population. Now as patients are being discharged from hospital, faint glimmers of hope start to appear and be felt amongst the nation. However, we remain on our guard and aware that the fight is not yet won.

Soon, as it has been announced by Mr. Danny Faure, the president of the Republic and the personnel from the Health Authorities, life will gradually resume. The question yet remains whether we as a country will return back to 'normal'? Will our health professionals be able to return to the same pace and rhythm of work they were on prior to COVID-19? Will their way of practicing remain unchanged? Only time will tell.



## What's Inside?

### Resolution:

On the inside, looking out

-Page 2

### Actualité:

Behind scenes of COVID-19

-Page 3

Heroes in the shadows

-Page 4

PH Lab benefits from goggles

Dengue

-Page 5

### Article:

Swallowing Awareness Day

-Page 6

Autism Awareness Day

-Page 7

World Physical Therapy Day

-Page 8

Measles National Campaign

- Page 9

### Spotlight:

Podiatry

-Pg. 10

### HPC & CPD MATTERS:

Review of Strategic Plan

- Pg. 11-13

### Feature:

Farewell: OT long service staff

- Page 14

## Resolution...

### On the Inside, Looking Out

*Yes, I had to look at the popular expression 'on the outside, looking in' on the flip side.*

"I want to lose weight."

"I hope to be more present for my son as he completes his final year of his secondary studies."

"I've made up my mind, I'm going to go to a private clinic and get them to run a full medical test on me at the beginning of the year."

"I think it's time I start saving up, for hard times ahead."

"I do not believe in making those."

Some people would not be afraid to stand at the top of a mountain to shout theirs out loud, whilst some others would want nothing to have to do with this. A great majority look forward to doing it, whilst another group is revolted by the very idea. Some would make quiet reflections whilst others would not think twice about broadcasting theirs live on national TV or sharing their thoughts on social media.

By now you must have guessed what I'm talking about, **NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS**.

Whether you love it or hate it, we have to admit that although perhaps we don't necessarily make New Year resolutions, I can bet that all of us hardworking individuals out there, set goals for ourselves. For the scholars, they might be setting their sight on a distinction, for a family-perhaps they're making holiday plans, the newlyweds they just want to nestle into a cosy home.

It is those very goals that help us not give up easily when the going gets tough. Just like finding the motivation to hit the gym or join a Zumba class despite being tired or having kids to care for after work. Most of the time, it's a "No pain, no gain" deal!

To reap the fruits of your labour you need to make time for yourself, stay motivated and grow a resilient shell. In the end, you'll be happy with that one size smaller, more confident person, staring back at you in the mirror. You know, the one who didn't quit.

Sadly, for us though, it felt like by the end of January 2020 our New Year resolution plans screeched to a resonating end when the Coronavirus brought the world to its knees. This is uncharted territory for us, it's history in the making, we're adjusting to this calamity and our goals are keeping us hopeful. That one day we'll be able to safely set foot outside our homes again and resume what once used to be 'our normal lives'. If we are honest with ourselves though, we'll have to admit that our lives would never be the same again. Even our priorities have shifted. Post Covid 19, we would just be different because nobody comes out of a war unaffected and ours was a ruthless, invisible enemy.

But one good thing that the quarantine 'pause' did for us, was to help us look inward and reflect on ourselves and our lives. Perhaps, in a way and I'm even afraid to say this, it was a reminder. A reminder for us to take better care of our communities, our families, ourselves. To stop taking things for granted because tomorrow is never promised and we certainly don't have no control of what it has in store for us.

I wonder what next year's resolutions are going to sound like.

***My thoughts and prayers go out to all the people who have lost their lives due to the COVID-19 virus and all those who have been affected.***

***Author: Anonymous***

## Actualité

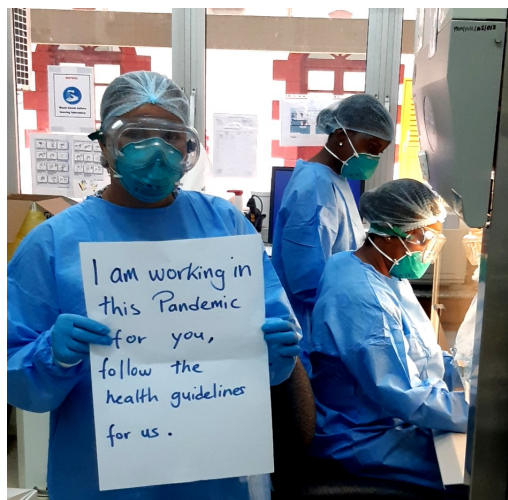
**Behind the Scenes of COVID -19**

*"Working behind the scenes - The Clinical Lab provided support during the Covid-19 pandemic to the Coronavirus-confirmed patients admitted at the Isolation Center at Perseverance. The laboratory at the Isolation Center was put into operations for this purpose and provides testing for hematology, biochemistry and blood gas analysis, which is important for patients having breathing difficulties and on ventilators. Doctors were able to monitor the conditions of their patients by the various lab tests offered on site."*

**Joanne Pragassen**



## COVID-19: Heroes In the Shadows



As the world applauds and celebrates the doctors and nurses for their bravery, commitment and heroism in the face of this pandemic, behind the curtains and closed doors, the laboratory technicians and technologists are also busily and quietly saving the world. Laboratory technicians are health professionals trained to perform tests on biological samples from patients in order to detect pathogens, monitor for contaminants and other components of the sample. This is done through scientific investigations and experimentations whereby they follow established protocols to ensure quality assured results. On the other hand, laboratory technologists are professionals specialised particular in biomedical sciences, such as microbiology, chemistry, toxicology and haematology and who have in depth understanding of testing processes and technological equipment used within a laboratory environment.

Here in the Seychelles, on the ground floor of the laboratory block behind the Red Roof of the Seychelles Hospital, Leon Biscornet, the Head of the Seychelles Public Health Laboratory (SPHL) and his team of 16 laboratory warriors, assisted by three (3) volunteers qualified in laboratory sciences, busily process samples from suspected COVID-19 patients. It is in this lab that suspected cases of COVID-19 are either confirmed as being a positive case or a negative case.

According to the head of lab, it is pivotal for laboratories that are carrying out tests for COVID-19 to abide firmly to biosafety practices. The SPHL of the Seychelles Hospital possesses a Biosafety Laboratory Class Two (2+) unit — equipped with a Biosafety Class 2 cabinet with a High-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter, double door entry, autoclave and negative-air pressured space—ideal for tuberculosis testing and also used therefore for COVID-19 testing. Biosafety Level 3 laboratory practices are used to ensure their own safety through the proper wearing of special personal protection equipment (PPE), as they analyse the samples which at any one time has the potential to produce aerosols and cause contamination.

Although the SPHL has scaled down other testing considerably to focus primarily on COVID-19 testing, it is still conducting other important tests such as leptospirosis, dengue, and measles. The head of lab stated that although the arrival of the pandemic to the Seychelles shore has changed the work schedule of the staff and the lab services on offer, he is thankful to God that to date the SPHL has been able to assist in the early detection through molecular analyses, namely PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction), and thus participated in the containment of the disease together with the effort of other health professionals.

Thank you to our 20 warriors, amongst which 17 are women; some of which, mothers.



**"Before COVID-19 we conducted other tests in this Lab, but since the outbreak we use this lab specific for COVID-19 tests only"**

**Leon Biscornet**



## Actualité

## Public Health Lab Benefits from Goggles



Public Health Lab receiving eye checks for safety prescription goggles to be used for lab testing procedures offered by fellow HCW optometrist Hermann Holst of Vision Care Seychelles, STC.



Records shows an increase on in the number of confirmed dengue cases in the country for the period between January—April this year. Dengue is a mosquito transmitted disease resulting in high fever, head ache, vomiting, muscle and joint pains, and skin rash. Severe dengue can have even more severe complications.

**Prevention:** Get rid of open water sources, wear clothes that covers the skin fully, use mosquito nets, repellent.



## Swallowing Awareness Day



Eating, drinking and swallowing are essential to life. Despite that, not much attention is paid to these processes and they are often taken for granted until something goes wrong. And yet human beings are often engaged in these processes on a constant basis. Human swallow between 500-700 times per day, even more when we are having a meal.

Because of the little attention despite its great importance, a group of speech pathologists from Speech Pathology Australia and East Sussex Healthcare Trust NHS made it their mission to begin a Swallowing Awareness Campaign in 2016 to

help raise awareness on the importance of recognising dysphagia (swallowing difficulties) as a condition that affects many people worldwide as well as to highlight speech pathologists involvement in its management.

This year, Swallowing Awareness Day was marked on **Wednesday 18th March 2020**, under the main theme **“Dysphagia: A difficult diagnosis to swallow”**. According to Smithard (2015) 16-25% people around the world are estimated to have a swallowing issues at some point in their lives. Some people may experience a swallowing issue immediately post birth, while others may acquire it later in life after suffering a stroke, brain injury, progressive disorders such as dementia, Parkinson diseases and even cancer. Hence, a swallowing issue may occur at any stage of life and may present as difficulty with sucking, swallowing, drinking, chewing, eating, controlling saliva, and taking medicine. A swallowing difficulty may make it difficult for a person to protect his or her airway, hence may result in aspiration pneumonia (chest infection), coughing and choking, even death. People with swallowing difficulties may experience dehydration, malnutrition, and/or weight loss. Their psychological health and quality of life may also be profoundly affected / compromised in the presence of the swallowing difficulties. Therefore, despite it being ‘a silent condition’, a swallowing difficulty may impact significantly on an individual’s life and that of their families managing their limitations and difficulties.

Therefore, despite it being part of our everyday function, eating, drinking and swallowing merit our undivided attention as it holds a significant place in our daily being. Without these processes working effectively our lives would be very different and limited. Let’s us be aware, value, valorise and celebrate our swallowing skills for

**“Dysphagia can be a difficult diagnosis to swallow”.**

**Many older people will have swallowing problems; frail elderlies are more at risk of being readmitted to the hospital due to dysphagia (Smithard, 2015)**

### Sources:

Royale College Speech and Language Therapy: <https://www.rcslt.org/news/swallowing-awareness-day>

Smithard, D. S. (2016). Dysphagia: A Geriatric Giant. *Medical & Clinical Review*, 2(5). doi: 10.21767/2471-299X.1000014

Speech Pathology Australia:  
<https://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au>

## ARTICLE

## World Autism Awareness Day

World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD) is celebrated every year on the **2<sup>nd</sup> April** and is commemorated by **‘lighting it up blue’** – either by individuals wearing something blue, or buildings or landmarks being lit blue to show support for all those living with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Activities are planned annually worldwide with the aim of increasing everyone’s knowledge and thus creating greater understanding of this condition.

Over the last few years, the Autism Association in Seychelles commemorated WAAD by inviting children and adults with ASD and their families as well as members of the public to take part in a family fun day, which included several fund raising activities such as a fun run, sale of food and drinks as well as sale of t-shirts. This year however, due to the Covid-19 pandemic the planned fun day had to be cancelled. Instead the Vice-Chairperson of the Autism Association, Ms. Marie-Annette Ernesta, gave an interview on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April to explain some of the current and upcoming activities of the association. This was done via a television news broadcast on the local media, the *Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation* (SBC).

Below is the message from the United Nation’s Secretary General, Mr. António Guterres, on World Autism Awareness Day:

*“On World Autism Awareness Day, we recognize and celebrate the rights of persons with autism. This year’s observance takes place in the midst of a public health crisis unlike any other in our lifetimes — a crisis that places persons with autism at disproportionate risk as a result of the coronavirus and its impact on society.*

*Persons with autism have the right to self-determination, independence and autonomy, as well as the right to education and employment on an equal basis with others. But the breakdown of vital support systems and networks as a result of COVID-19 exacerbates the obstacles that persons with autism face in exercising these rights. We must ensure that a prolonged disruption caused by the emergency does not result in rollbacks of the rights that persons with autism and their representative organizations have worked so hard to advance.*

*Universal human rights, including the rights of persons with disabilities, must not be infringed upon in the time of a pandemic. Governments have a responsibility to ensure that their response includes persons with autism. Persons with autism should never face discrimination when seeking medical care. They must continue to have access to the support systems required to remain in their homes and communities through times of crisis, instead of facing the prospect of forced institutionalization.*

*We all have a role to play in ensuring that the needs of people who are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 are met during this difficult period. Information about precautionary measures must be provided in accessible formats. We must also recognize that when schools employ online teaching, students with non-standard ways of learning may be at a disadvantage. The same applies to the workplace and working remotely. Even in these unpredictable times, we must commit to consulting persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, and ensuring that our non-traditional ways of working, learning, and engaging with each other, as well as our global response to the coronavirus, are inclusive of and accessible to all people, including persons with autism.*

*The rights of persons with autism must be taken into account in the formulation of all responses to the COVID-19 virus. On World Autism Awareness Day, let us stand together, support each other and show solidarity with persons with autism”.*



Source: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/autism-day>

## Article

## World Physical Activity Day- 6th April

### What is physical activity?

World Health Organization (WHO) defines physical activity as *any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure* – including activities undertaken while *working, playing, carrying out household chores, travelling, and engaging in recreational pursuits*.

The term "physical activity" should not be confused with "exercise", which is a subcategory of physical activity that is planned, structured, repetitive, and aims to improve or maintain one or more components of physical fitness. Beyond exercise, any other physical activity that is done during leisure time, for transport to get to and from places, or as part of a person's work, has a health benefit. Further, both moderate- and vigorous-intensity physical activity improve health.

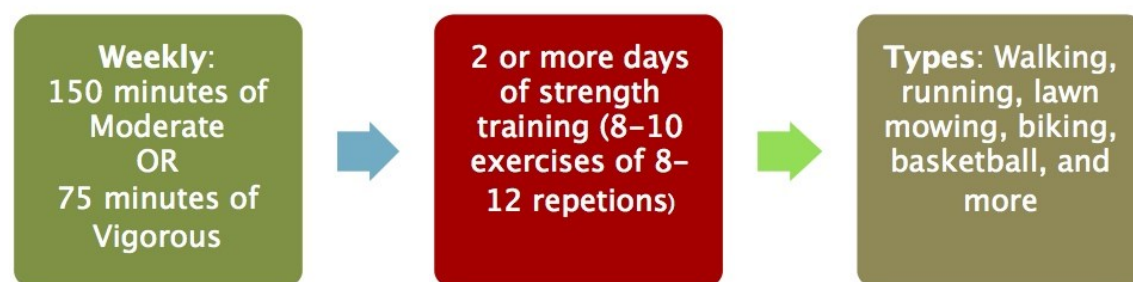
### How much of physical activity is recommended?

Amount and intensity of physical activity according to age as recommended by WHO:

#### CHILDREN (Under 17)



#### ADULTS (18-64 years old):



#### OLDER ADULTS (65 years old & older):

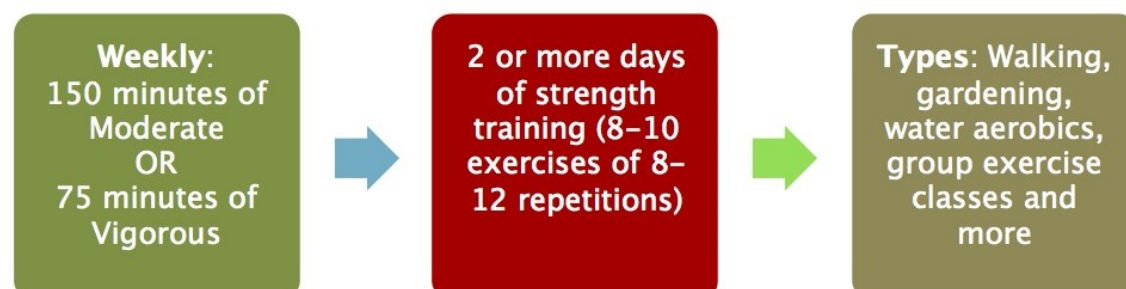


Table adopted from: Kansas State University-Department of Kinesiology:

<https://www.hhs.k-state.edu/kines/kineseducation/parecommendation.html>

## ARTICLE

## Measles: A National Fight towards Eradication



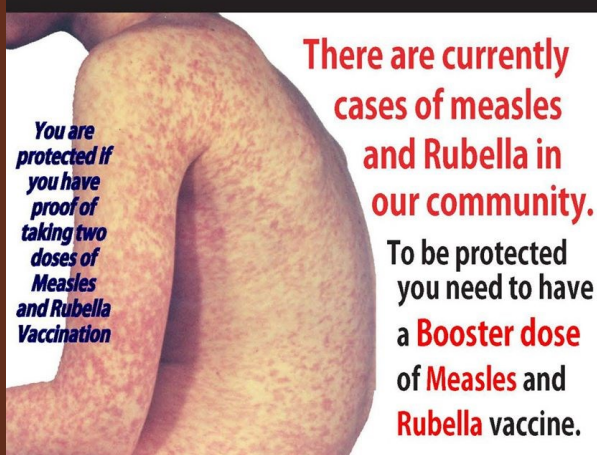
*In this day and age one would think that diseases such as Measles and German Measles would be a thing from the past. However, according to World Health Organisation (WHO) Measles outbreaks continue to inflict the world, touching the lives of many, especially children, despite the availability of safe and effective vaccine. Seychelles has not been spared from this highly contagious infectious disease caused by the Morbillivirus, the reason why the Department of Health initiated a national vaccination program in October 2019 with the aim to vaccinate as many people possible with the intent to eliminate the transmission of the measles and German Measles. This exercise was intensified early 2020.*

*The Public Health Authority (PHA) released a press release on the 18th January 2020 and reported that 3 out of 15 suspected cases were identified to have measles. The reported indicated that Seychelles was at risk and the PHA remains alerted as this disease is transmitted from one person to the next through direct contact and through the air, which posed potential risks.*

*According to Department of Health once infected complications may result in brain inflammation, severe diarrhoea, related dehydration, ear infection or pneumonia, even death—more common in children below 5 and adults above 30. Pregnant women are also considered an at risk group.*

**PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR CHILDREN  
AGAINST MEASLES AND GERMAN MEASLES.**

Are you protected from  
**MEASLES?**



**Were you born before 1989?**

**Do you have children 6 to 14 months, 16 months to 5 years?**

**Are you over 20 years with no record of two doses of Measles & Rubella vaccination?**

**Contact or visit your Local Health Centre today about getting vaccinated. It's free.**

Produced by the Health Promotion Unit, Department of Health, Heritage House  
For more information call: 438805938 or visit Department of Health Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/indohydratedofficial/>

**Seychelles' first recorded outbreak: 1967**

**Other outbreaks: 1982—1983; 1997, 2019-2020**

**Introduction of measles, mumps and rubella vaccine: 1989**

## PODIATRY IN THE SEYCHELLES

**C**urrently at the Rehabilitation Centre at North East Point you can now find a fairly new service, dedicated to analyze, diagnose and treat various disorders related to the feet. This new service is called **PODIATRY**. Podiatry experts, also known as **podiatrists**, are trained health professionals and can handle multiple conditions as long as the action does not require complex surgery. They can manage pathologies such as hyperkeratosis (simple or complicated), corns, plantar warts, diabetic foot related disorders, ingrown toe nails, nail trimming and also general foot care.

The two podiatrists, *Yaibsel Montalvo Johnston* and *Yordan Plasencia Ortega* have been providing services in the Seychelles for almost two years now. Although based at the North East Rehab Centre, they also provide services to Anse Royale Health Centre, Anse Boileau Clinic, Elderly Home and Seychelles Hospital.

If you require any information about your feet, please do not hesitate to contact the Podiatry Unit. They will be happy to help...





## HPC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

**A**ccording to the *Health Professionals Act (2006)*, which covers Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) belonging to any of the categories specified under Schedule 1 of the Act,

4. (1) The functions of the Council are –

- (a) to register and to monitor the competence and regulate the performance of Health Professionals in Seychelles for the purpose of promoting and upholding the highest possible standard of their practice;
- (b) to inquire into allegations of serious professional misconduct and malpractice by Health Professionals and to take appropriate action in respect thereof.

In order to fulfil these functions in a systematic and consistent manner, in line with the provisions of the Health Professionals Act (2006), the Council must put in place a number of *Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)*.

From **September to November 2019**, Council members, with the guidance and assistance of an external consultant, reviewed, developed, and formalized several SOPs relating to the following:

- ◆ Complaint Handling Process
- ◆ Monitoring of Allied Health Professions
- ◆ Issuance of Certificates
- ◆ Handling Lapsed Registrations & Unregistered AHPs
- ◆ Review of CPD Portfolio
- ◆ Conduct of Continuous Professional Development for AHPs
- ◆ First-Time Registration Process
- ◆ Renewal of Registration Process

Final editing in preparation for printing of these SOPs is currently underway. The finalized documents will be made accessible to all registrants and partners.

While the majority of the content of the SOPs is in line with existing practice, some new structures, procedures, and forms have been developed. Details of these will be communicated to registrants and other stakeholders over the coming months and as and when required.



## ***RENEWALS OF REGISTRATION***

One important aspect that is not new but does need to be reinforced is the matter of timely renewals of registration. In line with *Health Professionals Act (2006)*, Article 7(c), the requirement for renewal of registration is that the applicant **“was registered under this Act immediately before making the application”**. If registration expires, therefore, an Allied Health Professional (AHP) **cannot apply** for ‘renewal of registration’ but rather must **apply as though a first time applicant**, (i.e. following the same procedures as a first time applicant) with both processing fee (SCR 300) and registration fee (SCR 300) applied in accordance with S.I. 1 of 2019 (*Health Professionals (Fees) Regulations, 2018*).

In line with the HPC’s mandate of promoting and upholding the highest possible standard of practice, evidence of recent *Continuing Professional Development (CPD)* must be submitted both for those renewing their registration as well as those who have lapsed registrations and are seeing to be re-registered.

Registrants are reminded that it is the responsibility of the Allied Health Professional to make sure their registration is valid and that it is an offence to practice without valid registration. Registrants are asked to submit their applications for renewal of registration **one to two months prior to the expiry of their registration** to allow sufficient time for their applications to be processed, and to include all required documents to avoid any delays.

Forms for ‘Registration’ and ‘Renewal of Registration’ can be downloaded from the HPC’s website ([www.hpcseychelles.org/](http://www.hpcseychelles.org/)). However, if you have an queries or require further clarifications, please do not hesitate to contact HPC’s office within working hours or email: [registrarhpc@health.gov.sc](mailto:registrarhpc@health.gov.sc)



## Reviews of HPC Strategic Plan 2015—2020 Moving On...

The Health Professionals Council (HPC) Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020 was developed by a group of Allied Health Professionals under the guidance and expertise of the Executive Director of the Guy Morel's Institute; Mrs. Shella Mohideen. The goals, objectives, strategies and targets set in this first Strategic Plan had as ultimate aim to achieve positive outcomes.

We are in 2020, the question that needs to be asked is have we achieved the objectives set; How useful was the plan?

To be able to answer the above, the HPC decided to stop, review and analyze. The methodology used was an open discussion with members of the Council, under the guidance of our consultant, Mrs. Shella Mohideen and her team. The sessions were held at the Guy Morel Institute at Ma Joie.



The initial process started with a review and analysis of the different pillars as stated in the Strategic Plan. The willingness and commitment of the participants facilitated the identification of what has been achieved and what needed to be improved further.

The original plan was for us to meet, do the review and then proceed with the drafting of a new Strategic plan for 2021 -2025. Unfortunately our dynamism has been cut short with the sudden appearance of an uninvited guest; COVID -19. After two (2) sessions we had to put all plans on hold but this does not mean that it ends here.

We, members of the HPC, are more determined than ever to work hard and produce a new plan for the next five year. The Strategic plan 2021-2025 will set the direction and contribute to the further enhancement of the Health Professionals Council.

## FEATURE

## A long serving Occupational Therapy Staff bids Farewell



Mrs. Anne-Marie Marguerite joined the Ministry of Health service on the 12<sup>th</sup> June 1978, with Mental Hospital. Through the past 40 years she stated to have seen evolution and progress in the Health care services and also in the Occupational Therapy service in Seychelles. She has worked mainly in the mental setting whereby her contribution has immensely been appreciated. She feels sad to retire but is looking forward to being at home with her children and grandchildren. She will always continue to pray for us Occupational Therapy staff. To end, she advised us all too always be patient, persevere so as for us to see progress through active listening of others. Thank you Ti Anne for your wonderful devotion to the service and happy retirement and may God bless you always.



## POSTER

An equal world  
is an enabled world.

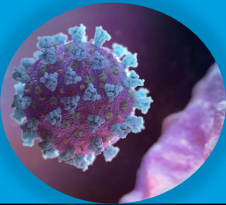
#EachforEqual  
#IWD2020



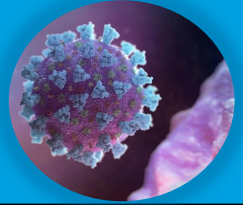
International Women's Day



Taken from: <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/>



# Covid—19



## Protect others from getting sick

When coughing and sneezing  
**cover mouth and nose** with  
flexed elbow or tissue



**Throw tissue into closed bin  
immediately after use**

**Clean hands** with alcohol-based  
hand rub or soap and water  
after coughing or sneezing and  
when caring for the sick



World Health  
Organization

## POSTER

# What is World Water Day?

## 22 March



### Every year since 1993

UN-Water – the UN's co-ordinating body on water. United Nations Observance Day focusing on importance of freshwater.



### What is the aim?

Raise awareness of the 2.2 billion people living without access to safe water.

Support the achievement of UN Sustainable Development Goal 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030.



### 2020 Theme

How our use of water will: help reduce floods, droughts, scarcity and pollution help fight climate change itself.

Additional focus on vital importance of hygiene #cleanhands to combat COVID-19.

For more info: [www.worldwaterday.org](http://www.worldwaterday.org).

## We can all make a big difference

- Regularly choose a shower over bath – a shower uses 50% less water
- Install a low-flush toilet.
- Switch to water efficient appliances
- Rainwater capture for use in garden/home
- Washing only full loads
- Installing water-saving showerheads
- Fixing leaks immediately!

**Aliaxis**



2020 Water and climate change



### Reducing water waste

46 billion litres of treated water fails to reach the consumer each day worldwide. Poorly maintained networks play a significant part in that. Intelligent water pumps and distributed sensor systems for leak detection offer great opportunities for efficiency improvements.

### Water stress is a worldwide problem

Aliaxis supports #WorldWaterDay. We drill for water, so more people have access, design smart systems to prevent water contamination in high-rise buildings. Make sure our products protect the quality of the water during transport.

Taken from: <https://aliaxis.com/world-water-day-covid19/>



“No disability or dictionary out there is capable of clearly defining who we are as a person.”

- Robert M Hensel

LATESTLY



World  
Down  
Syndrome  
Day

**NOTICES****CPD Point System**

**Since March 2019, HPC has introduced a CPD point system, which became fully operational in October of the same year.**

**All registrants are being encouraged to participate in CPDs and show proof of their attendances in their portfolio.**

**Any queries kindly contact HPC's office.**

It is your responsibility as an Allied Health Professional to ensure that your registration with the Health Professionals Council Seychelles is current and valid.

It is against Seychelles' law as an Allied Health Professional to practice without valid registration.

(Health Professionals Act 2006)

For more information on your registration status,

Visit our [online register](#)

or

Contact the HPC Registrar on

Tel: (+248) 4 303745 / 2 606128

Email: [registrarhpc@health.gov.sc](mailto:registrarhpc@health.gov.sc)



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