



## HEALTHY AGEING

### Faith-based Organisations

#### What We Know

An evaluation of the 2007 CARICOM Heads of Government Declaration on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) has reinforced the critical need for an all-of-society approach to challenging the NCDs epidemic.

Across the religious spectrum, faith-based organisations are a key part of this multisectoral approach and here we suggest some of the ways in which you can use your reach and impact to really make a difference in helping the people of the Caribbean lead longer, healthier lives. Many faith-based organisations have already recognised the threat posed by NCDs, and promote paths to health, healthy ageing and wellness among followers, and participate in multisectoral NCDs meetings.

Faith based organisations have long been the pillar and strength of leadership and social institutions within communities. In addition to religious worshipping, these organisations are ideal for designing and promoting health-based programmes and services.

Some organisations across the Region are running general lifestyle intervention programmes. Religious leaders are encouraging followers to eat better, move more and avoid stress, some are supporting fitness activities like regular walks and publishing healthy living sections in newsletters and bulletins.

In February 2014, representatives of 26 faith-based organisations in Barbados got together and issued the **Bridgetown Declaration** in which it was agreed that the religious communities would use their considerable resources and influence to promote healthy living and prevent the rise in NCDs.





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#### What you can do as faith-based organisations

- Initiate collaborative relationships with community health agencies to extend preventative health services to the ageing population
- Support interventions that could serve to lessen the risk of disease, while improving the health and well-being of the ageing population.
- Ensure participation in National NCDs Commissions and/or NCDs alliances.
- Become national champions for the NCDs response, engaging with the media and spreading the health and wellness message.
- Observe Caribbean Wellness Day/Week and use this as a springboard for year-round activity.
- Arrange for group exercise activities before or after services/religious activity.
- Organise healthy eating and exercise support groups.
- Ensure that healthy food options are available and promoted during religious functions.
- Organise healthy cooking demonstrations.
- Publish healthy living sections in bulletins and newsletters.
- Have blood pressure monitors to check blood pressure and equipment to measure weight and height to determine Body Mass Index.
- Develop written policies and programmes aimed at supporting health-seeking behaviour change.





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More about:

- Caribbean Wellness Day
- Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health
- Port of Spain Evaluation on Noncommunicable Diseases
- Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)
- Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC)
- Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

