Dear Colleagues,

The Secretariat at CariPHLN would like to extend New Year greetings to you and your loved ones. We wish you continued health and success throughout 2020 as we look forward to your continued collaboration towards the improvement of laboratory systems across the Caribbean.

As you may be aware, this year has already started with a major bang in the form of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV). Our colleagues in the CARPHA Medical Microbiology Laboratory (CMML) are actively involved in the preparedness and response through CARPHA’s Incident Management Team (IMT).

The Secretariat is pleased to share the documents which have been circulated to date to the Member States and will continue to keep our members updated.

However, we wish to reflect upon all the good work done in 2019 by our members to strengthen laboratory initiatives in the region. Special mention to our partners - CMLF, CDC, PAHO, PHAC and OECS to name a few in their continued support of this network.

Laboratory Strengthening & National Policies

In August, CMLF highlighted the achievements made by OECS countries regarding their laboratory services. The Mount St. John’s Medical Centre (MSJMC) Laboratory in Antigua recently met Tier 1 requirements of the Caribbean Laboratory Quality Management Systems- Stepwise Improvement Process (LQMS-SIP).

With regards to National Laboratory Policy, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines as well as St. Kitts & Nevis Cabinets have already approved their respective National Laboratory Policy with the draft legislation being submitted to the Attorney General’s Office for both St. Vincent & the Grenadines and St. Kitts & Nevis. Read more here: https://spark.adobe.com/page/DDROZRccs41V9/

Meeting for the Implementation Plan for National Laboratory Policy and Legislation

Biosafety and Biosecurity

CARPHA’s contributions to the Global Biosecurity Dialogue (GBD) was highlighted in the publication entitled “Accelerating Action in Global Health Security: Global Biosecurity Dialogue as a Model for Advancing the Global Health Security Agenda” which was published in the December 2019 issue of the ‘Health Security’ international journal. Click here https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/hs.2019.0121

CARPHA is now a member of the GHSA Action Package 3, Biosafety and Biosecurity Group following participation to the 2nd GBD, 2019.

Our friends at the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) have shared an Analytical document for the Development of a National
**Biosafety and Biosecurity System** which is formatted in a downloadable manual and an online e-learning course. PHAC has also developed an Insider and Outsider Threat course which proposes mitigation strategies aimed at reducing the occurrence of biosecurity events. Both courses can be found on PHAC’s training portal for free. *Click here https://training-formation.phac-aspc.gc.ca/?lang=en.*

**Laboratory Stalwarts Honored**

In Barbados, Dr. Edmund Blades has been awarded the *Barbados Service Star* for his service to Public Health as a Microbiologist and his contribution to research into the Sahara dust.

From Guyana, Ms. Joyce Whyte-Chin was honoured for her valuable contribution to laboratory services over the years.

![CMO Dr. Shamdeo Persaud presenting Ms Joyce Whyte-Chin, National Coordinator, Medical Laboratory Services, with her award.](image)

**Looking ahead at 2020**

As CARPHA initiates activities of the recently awarded World Bank OECS Regional Health Security project, we will be engaging members to facilitate delivery of activities.

We encourage you to send your achievements, mentions and special work you are doing to the Secretariat so that we may share the good news with our members.