

Honourable Governor of St. Thomas

Honourable Senators

Distinguished members of the Congressional Black Caucus

Member of the Government of St. Thomas

Special Guests and invitees

Member of the head table

Distinguished Speakers

The organisers of the Seventh Annual National Conference on Health Disparities

Local and international Press

All your distinguished ladies and gentlemen good afternoon

**It** is a privilege and honour for me to be a part of such an important and prestigious event. The core of the **Seventh Annual National Conference on Health Disparities** touches one of the most important components in mankind's role on the planet. It poses a simple question to us: as human beings, who are we? We are under the obligation to provide an adequate answer; an answer that should not be fabricated or illogical.

We are dealing with today's reality; the issue of health disparities is not a proposition or an idea of someone who wants to be famous; the term "health disparities" is not an expression of opinion, it is a last heartfelt call for judgment. In my view Health disparities should be viewed as a second element toward the targeted objectives. The First element should be viewed as: Human Disparities because health service is offered by human beings for the benefit of other human beings. The disparities that exist among human beings create a full range of

problems involving morality, conscience of the people we are dealing with, history, and current events regarding our behaviour and conduct on this planet.

The very existence of a society depends on its decency, which calls for a recognition that the heartbeat of one human being is not different than another's. This recognition should commence from home; between parents and children. The concept that each human being's value must be properly considered and accepted should be addressed in our churches, workplace, and social activities. Our schools should even teach that concept as a subject.

These things must be done to counteract the negative effects of technology in our society. Sometime I even think certain parents are resigned from their parental responsibility and technology is taking over. Family home discussion is disappeared, texting, games, chatting, face book, tweeters etc. are currently take over our family discussion.

As an example when we consider a killing with a firearm and conclude that a gun control program must be implemented, we should not end the discussion there. While it is true that issue of the gun control program should be addressed, it should be kept in mind that guns do not kill, people kill.

Among several interpretations Health Disparities can be defined as: "the gaps in the quality of health care across racial, ethnic, sexual orientation and socioeconomic groups."

Health disparities are also often called "unfairness and/or discrimination" in some countries. Disparities in healthcare represent a chronic problem on a global scale, one of the defining issues of our time but it has been most neglected in the Haitian community. Certain critical issues on Health disparities can be caused due to the living conditions of certain groups or countries that have experienced major natural disasters; for example, Haiti. In terms of natural disasters, Haiti is placed in the first position and in health care spending, Haiti ranks last in the western hemisphere.

A great deal of research on social elements of health and socio-ecological model have surfaced, which connects economic and social conditions in determining a population's health.

The number of physicians, nurses and health professionals that provide medical service to the people in Haiti are insufficient and access to medical care is limited. Since the earthquake in January of 2010, the living conditions of the people in Haiti have been substantially impacted by the destruction of homes, hospitals, school, clinics etc.

Therefore, as part of **PetroGaz-Haiti**'s initiative, in order to assist with the health disparities, **PetroGaz-Haiti** offers a comprehensive approach that focuses on bringing healthcare professionals in Haiti to provide training to the people in Haiti. The trainees will learn that a community's well-being is enhanced when social problems are managed, human beings' needs are met, and social opportunities and human rights are optimized.

The trainees will use that training education to assist the rest of the population; especially, those who are in the remote areas that do not have access to healthcare. Educating them on Environmental health challenges and actions; communicable diseases challenges and actions; non- communicable disease challenges and actions and challenges and actions in reproductive health, child and adolescent health, and care for older persons.

In addition, **PGH** entered into agreements with several different training facilities within the Caribbean region to provide training to Haitian citizens. Education is a crucial element in health disparities because lack of education disqualifies potential workers and diminishes the value of the wages. In essence that contributes to low income or even no income to afford healthcare when needed. To enhance our social responsibilities, presently, **PGH** executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the government of Trinidad & Tobago to build one of their modern training facilities in Haiti to facilitate the training process locally in Haiti. Such effort will ease the training education process, allowing graduates to obtain a job with better wages that will offer an opportunity to have a better life. Furthermore, the training program has an

international certification program which enables graduates to work as a certified trainee in the field selected anywhere that proxy is accepted.

Healthcare disparities is a global challenge that the world is facing but we as human beings are responsible not just to address it but deal with it and correct it at a rapid rate. It is unjust and unconscionable for us as human beings to be the proclaimer of life and not the saver of life. Addressing the issue of health disparities should not be viewed as a political task; it is a responsibility driven by humanity's conscience and a moral obligation to protect life and promote good life.

Most of the health disparities issues are potentially avoidable, especially when they are related to factors such as living in low-income neighborhoods or having unequal access to medical care. Reducing, if not eliminating, health disparities is an important goal for a number of reasons. **PGH's** approach not only reduces risk of developing health related issues or life threatening diseases, but improves the everyday quality of life.

Let me conclude by leaving each of you with this simple heartfelt question: What happens in your heart when the life of someone you know is destroyed forever? What would happen in your heart to see my life end on this podium while speaking before you?

Ladies and gentlemen, life is too precious and the destruction of it is too painful. We must stand and fight together for what we believe, promoting and contributing to a better life.

Thank you for your collective attention