

Guyana Public Service Union

"RIGHTS AT WORK - ENDING POVERTY & INEQUALITY"

PRESIDENT: Mr. Patrick M. Yarde
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IN REPLYING PLEASE QUOTE DATE
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118

DATE: May 16, 2022.

His Excellency Dr. Irfaan Ali
President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana
Office of the President
Shiv Chanderpaul Drive,
Bourda,
Georgetown.

Jeanelle Simpson
Reg. Department
2022.05.16

Dear President Ali,

CALL FOR EXPEDITIOUS ENHANCEMENT TO CONDITIONS OF SERVICE FOR MEDICAL PERSONNEL

The Guyana Public Service Union (GPSU) recognizes the dilemma of medical personnel within Guyana that exist because of the deprecated conditions of service and hereby petitions your administration to alleviate the financial pressures and improve working conditions, among other things, in order that these professionals can reasonably subsist above their current reality.

It is common knowledge that medical practitioners, nurses and other medical professionals in Guyana are the lowest paid in the Region, even with the Country's superior wealth and budgetary resources garnered annually from the highest regime of taxation in the Caribbean, together with revenues from gold and other precious metals, diamonds, timber, bauxite, rice and other agricultural products, vast amounts of arable land and now oil.

Government, most recently, made available funding amounting to \$1.875 billion dollars to pay to 7,500 severed sugar workers that had already been paid severance benefits from the APNU/AFC Administration, but could only manage a paltry seven percent (7%) across the board payout for each Public Servant. When incentives were to be granted to workers, the healthcare workers, who sacrificed much to save lives and maintain the state of health of the nation through the more devastating period of the COVID-19 Pandemic were granted disproportionately a tax free two-week one-off bonus, while the military received

3/...

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May 16, 2022

a tax free one-month bonus. Revenue Authority staffers, who also sacrificed much during the disquieting period, were adjudged unworthy of a bonus, as were some healthcare workers across the Country.

In summary, the rewards to the nation's workforce are strangely apportioned, when one considers the degrees of knowledge, complexity, training, commitment, and other factors, required for professional and competent job execution.

It is because of the observations above, and the indelible facts supporting the angst of the persons serving as Doctors and Nurses, countrywide, that GPSU decided to strongly represent this matter, with the hope that it finds favour and understanding at your level. In this regard, the GPSU is also proposing a menu of measures to make our Doctors and Nurses more comfortable throughout this period of high costs and for the future. This would also reduce, if not prevent, further exodus of these professionals, particularly nurses. The following measures are contemplated and seriously recommended to you for implementation, viz.

- Improved remuneration: The salaries of Doctors and Nurses should be improved by at least seventy-five percent (75%) and de-bunching of these professionals enabled to provide for clear distinction of seniority, together with the reinstitution of annual merit increments. This would enable these professionals to manage themselves and their households financially, while reclaiming their lost dignity within society that was surreptitiously removed over the years. This improvement in salary should be adorned by a suitable tax-free allowance that offsets any increased taxation the salary increases may have incurred.
- Duty Free Concessions: In addition to Doctors, Nurses from the level of Staff Nurse/Midwife and above should be granted duty free concessions.
- Hours of Work: In order to alleviate tiredness during shifts and decrease possibilities of malpractice, it is recommended that shorter hours of work be contemplated.
- Education and Training: To ensure that practicing Doctors and Nurses are availed with all skills necessary for the job, all personnel should be availed with free training scholarships and sabbaticals, up to university Masters and Doctoral levels, where necessary. In turn, these practitioners should be bonded to serve the Country for stipulated time periods.


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- Succession Planning: There is a need for professional and enlightened Human Resources Management within hospitals, health Centers and Clinics, which would ensure that on the job coaching, training and supervision provides an adequate basis for upward mobility of the Doctors and Nurses, which is free from victimization and other forms of discrimination.
- Work Environment: In general, hospitals, health Centers and Clinics should be refitted to make them more workers friendly. There should be adequate furnishings, restrooms, lunchrooms and washrooms for working Doctors and Nurses. The absence of these facilities at all work venues creates logistical nightmares for these professionals during the execution of duties. Even with such facilities, lack of maintenance and servicing also creates such negative effects. These improvements would definitely contribute to the much-deprived job satisfaction and improve motivation, performance and productivity.
- Upgrading of Doctors Quarters and Reestablishment of Functional Hostels for Nurses in Administrative Regions and Sub-Regions: The Quarters for Doctors in all Administrative Regions needs to be upgraded and properly furnished to meet the needs of the Doctors in service. Additionally, properly furnished Nurses Hostels needs to be reestablished in every Administrative Region and Sub-Region where necessary, to meet the need of Nurses on transfer, whether these are married or unmarried.

I do hope that the aforementioned recommendations find favour with you and your administration and are implemented, earliest.

Yours sincerely,


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Dawn Gardener
1st Vice President
F/President/CEO