

Barbadian nurses promised more if they stay at home

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, April 30, 2008 - The Barbados government is moving to improve the nursing profession to bring it in line with international standards, encourage these health care providers to stay at home and deliver on promises made to them last year.

Health Minister, Dr David Estwick who introduced a new Nurses Bill 2008 in Parliament yesterday which was subsequently passed, said the new legislation would facilitate some of these enhancements. He explained that it would establish of a Standards and Ethics sub-committee to monitor all aspects of the profession; develop a code of professional conduct for nurses in accordance with international standards; develop an implementation plan on mandatory continuing nursing education; and develop an accreditation system for continuing nursing education.

He added that government was aiming to have the nursing shortage under control within the next three years, and would turn to other regional countries for more of these professionals if necessary.

Dr Estwick however insisted that there was no exodus of nurses from the country.

Meantime Prime Minister David Thompson, whose Democratic Labour Party (DLP) was swept to power in the January general elections, assured that government would keep all the promises it made to nurses while it was in Opposition and leading up the poll.

The party had promised that if it was victorious in the elections, it would give duty-free access to motor cars for personal use for nurses as well as police officers and teachers; and establish a Home Ownership Revolving Fund for public sector workers including those in the nursing profession. The latter would provide interest-free loans to appointed public servants with five years' service who were first-time homeowners.

"We promised nurses and we are going to deliver on our promises," Mr Thompson said.

"We want people who are trained in Barbados and in the Caribbean to stay home and contribute to the development of our societies. We think it unacceptable that we should produce people in our educational system, telling them every day that if you study and get qualified you'll find a job and have a good standard of living in this country and as soon as they qualify they find it difficult to make ends meet and therefore have to look to greener pastures elsewhere," the prime minister added.

"I hope that this piece of legislation will have the desired affect in placing the nursing profession at a level commensurate with their aspirations."



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