

**TWELFTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA – FIRST SESSION (2020)**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**NOTICE PAPER NO. 24**

**Member Giving Notice:**     **The Minister of Health, M.P.**

**MOTION**

**GLOBAL PANDEMIC OF COVID-19**

WHEREAS the global pandemic of Covid-19 has changed the world as no other event in humankind's history with the world's economies slowing down with travel bans, lockdowns, curfews, school and university closures, closure of businesses and loss of jobs, increased poverty, and increased cases of domestic violence against women and children;

AND WHEREAS the first confirmed case of Covid-19 was identified in Guyana on March 11, 2020;

AND WHEREAS the former Government's response exposed its level of woeful unpreparedness despite advice and assistance from PAHO and other international bodies;

AND WHEREAS between March 11 and July 31, 2020, only 4,705 PCR tests were done at an average of 26 per day with a 7 day wait period; health facilities across the country, including the Public Hospital Georgetown, were under-resourced with PPE, drugs, medical equipment and sanitation supplies;

AND WHEREAS between August 2 and December 16, 2020, over 350 tests per day were done with an average turnaround time of 24-48 hours with more test kits, additional laboratory equipment, and trained personnel across the country;

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AND WHEREAS over these nine months, there have been 6,042 confirmed cases, 5,197 recoveries and 687 current cases with 158 deaths as of Dec 17;

AND WHEREAS billions of dollars have been expended from the October, 2020 Emergency Budget to restock the empty shelves of the public health sector with supplies of drugs, medical supplies and equipment, not only to treat Covid-19 patients, but also to treat HIV/AIDS, cancer, non-communicable diseases, malaria etc., and recommence the vaccination of our children which had lapsed badly in the last two years;

AND WHEREAS the Health sector has amplified its capacity to do as many as 1500 PCR tests on a daily basis with a 24-48-hour turnaround time;

AND WHEREAS rapid antigen tests, which have been recommended by the World Health Organisation, have been deployed to every region, which would improve waiting time to less than 30 minutes per test coupled with the deployment of PCR point of care testing to Regional hospitals over the next few weeks and improved contact tracing;

AND WHEREAS the private health sector is now included and involved in the fight to reduce the number of cases including building laboratory testing capacity;

AND WHEREAS the advent of several vaccines that have shown great promise, some with over 90 % efficacy are being cleared for use such as Pfizer, Moderna, etc.;

AND WHEREAS Guyana is accessing its vaccines through the COVAX Facility, launched in April by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Vaccine Alliance {GAVI} and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), in response to the pandemic and which seeks to ensure that people in all corners of the world are able to access COVID-19 vaccines once they are available;

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AND WHEREAS preparatory steps are underway to ensure Guyana is ready for a COVID-19 vaccine and it is expected that Guyana will be receiving in total, vaccines equivalent to 20% of its population, an initial 3% then 17% afterwards;

AND WHEREAS Guyana will have to acquire more or other vaccines through other means;

AND WHEREAS Health workers will be the first to receive the vaccine and elderly persons and persons with co-morbidities will be second in line;

AND WHEREAS the vaccines that receive Emergency Use Authorisation require special cold storage spaces to match the specific temperatures ranging from -70 C to 2 degrees C;

AND WHEREAS the Ministry of Health has started publishing bids for contractors to procure and install refrigerators and vaccine carriers, which must be completed before Guyana receives its first quota of the COVID-19 vaccines next year;

AND WHEREAS the new vaccines will require training health care staff that will be administering the vaccines so that Guyana will be ready to roll out the vaccines quickly;

AND WHEREAS a National Vaccine Task Force is being set up including the private sector and other civil society bodies to lead this major logistical undertaking;

AND WHEREAS the Government will be tabling the Corona Virus Immunization Bill in the National Assembly in early 2021,

4.

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly: -

- recognizes the seriousness of the Covid-19 pandemic in Guyana and the challenges it has posed and will continue to pose to our people and the nation over the coming year;

- pledge to support required resources needed to test, treat, and immunize our citizens;

- commit to support measures to bring relief to all Guyanese, especially those most in need with humanitarian and other initiatives to restore normalcy as soon as is feasible.

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