

Foreword

A Message from the Director

**In recognition of the
10th Annual Research Day Symposium
The UWI School of Clinical Medicine and Research,
The Bahamas**

In 1997, The University of the West Indies established the Clinical Training Programme in the Bahamas with the primary objective to teach clinical skills, knowledge and competencies to medical students in the final two years of their undergraduate degree programme. Ten years later the Director, Professor Howard Spencer, made the commitment to advance a research agenda as well, giving birth to The University of the West Indies, School of Clinical Medicine and Research, The Bahamas.

The School's vision was to become the leading centre of research, in all aspects of health in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. This supplement attests to our achievements as we celebrate the compilation of abstracts for the 10th Annual Research Day Symposium. Of the 174 presentations, 84% are original research projects submitted by faculty and students; the others by invited regional and international researchers. From nine submissions covering two sessions over a half-day event in the 1st Research Day, the 10th Annual event showcases 28 papers and six sessions covering two days. From a sporadic appearance at the Annual Caribbean Public Health Agency's Annual Scientific Conference, the School presenters have become regular fixtures on the regional and international podium. At CARPHA's meeting in 2013, we had the distinction of two of our postgraduate students sharing the award for the best research papers presented.

As we celebrate this milestone on the academic calendar, we are mindful of the mission central to our being: to improve the health of the people of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas through clinical research. The success of this 10th Research Day is measured best by the context in which we undertake to do research: we are all active practitioners, with both clinical and teaching responsibilities. The School has a full time staff of six university lecturers in partnership with 80 Associate lecturers, primarily of honorary status – all of whom have fulltime public and private practice; we deliver healthcare services every day. As we are not endowed with research grants and fellows, we owe a special thanks to faculty for their commitment to advancing

health in the country. In addition, we do not have the advantage of large class sizes; our combined 170 undergraduate and postgraduate students is twice the numbers of 10 years ago.

A quick read of the abstracts reveals the clinical focus; the strategic goal was to create within five years a research unit which will be the focal point of clinical research in the Bahamas with particular skills in: cardiovascular disease epidemiology, diabetes, obesity and maternal and child health. We have met our goal. This could not be possible without the Ethics Committee, lead by Dr Nelson Clarke, providing due diligence to evaluate and approve research proposals, and to be equaled only by the endless days and evenings of toil by our able-bodied epidemiologist Dr Morton Frankson, providing the guidance and required statistical input to all and sundry.

As we advance our research agenda into this second phase, we are cognizant of the fact that only few of our research initiatives have transcribed into the peer-reviewed journals. The dictum of publish or perish is not the mandate of active clinicians in the daily practice of delivering patient care in countries of limited resources. This supplement is a testament to our commitment to the academic imperative. So too, a year ago we launched our UWI Nassau Institute of Clinical excellence Bulletin (UWINICE).

We are proud of the new knowledge we have created over the past ten years. We thank our corporate partner, the Royal Bank of Canada, that has provided the financial sponsorship to the annual event, the College of the Bahamas School of Nursing and Allied Health Professions for sharing their academic facilities, the Public Hospitals Authority and the Ministry of Health – our primary supporters and resource providers and above all the people of The Bahamas, the life blood of our existence, our purpose of being.

Above all, we are mindful that there is no school without students to teach; the postgraduate students and their supervisors in their academic pursuits, have generated over 90% of the school's research presentations. This supplement, their work in print, we hope will inspire them to make the natural progression, to publish. In the words of Stephen King: "To write is human, to edit is divine".

With our recently appointed Research Committee Chairman Dr Darron Halliday, infused with all the millennium generation's technological skills, knowledge and competencies, and a new strategic plan with a vision for a National Research Health Council, the future of health research at the School of Clinical Medicine and Research, The Bahamas, is bright and purposeful.

Dr Robin Roberts
Director

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See you there!