

IN THE WORDS OF SIR KENNETH STANDARD



Public health in the Caribbean has experienced many significant advances over the past half century. Much of this has been due not only to outstanding contributions from individual practitioners but more importantly to the dedication and hard work of a committed cadre of health professionals working as a team. I became a member of this team in 1959.

My interest in public health issues was sparked long before I entered medicine, when as a high school teacher in Barbados I was involved in the teaching of hygiene and public health principles. An opportunity to expand my horizons was granted me when I became one of the 33 persons accepted to be the first group of medical students at the new University College of the West Indies in Jamaica (affiliated to the University of London, Great Britain).

My relationship with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) began in 1958, when PAHO awarded me a fellowship to attend the Graduate School of Public Health at the University of Pittsburgh, in the United States of America. This relationship with PAHO and WHO was to grow and flourish over the next few decades.

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From the very start in the 1960s through to my retirement in 1995 the work in public health was challenging and exciting. The focus in the Caribbean in the late 1960s and into the 1970s was on the development of the so-called 'new public health approach.' I was fortunate to have been able to make my particular contribution in helping to develop training programs in public health for all levels of staff. In this regard, PAHO was very instrumental in facilitating opportunities that lent considerably to the broadening of the scope of my work. PAHO collaborated with the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, other departments, and the University of the West Indies as a whole, as well as with ministries of health in the Caribbean region, to help promote public health.

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Cited from: Kenneth Livingstone Standard. My Journey in Public Health in the Caribbean. Rev Panam Salud Publica/Pan Am J Public Health 2002; 12(4): 223–6.