



BOA in healthy team-up with HSFB

This page compliments

BHL

Banks Holdings Limited

THE Barbados Olympic Association recently teamed up with the **Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados** to organise a number of Health Fairs across Barbados.

At the events members of the public were able to interact with staff of the Foundation and the BOA, getting useful tips and information on healthy living habits and best practices. Many took the opportunity to get free blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar tests, and to receive counselling and guidance from professional staff and volunteers of the Foundation.

The sessions were held

between 2 and 6 p.m. on November 6 and 27 and December 16, 2008, at the BOA's Olympic Centre in Wildey, Super Centre, Warrens and Emerald City, Six Roads, St Philip, respectively.

Dave Farmer, director of the Olympic Academy, noted that the BOA was pleased with the excellent response of the public to the health fairs. "The object of the events was to raise the level of awareness, not only of sports people, but also of the community in general, to the benefits of good living and proper dietary habits, and of regular exercise".

"Our teaming up with the **Heart & Stroke Foundation** was a way of emphasising our commitment to these goals and to healthy national development. We were pleased that we were able to offer our services in putting out valuable information, and, importantly, getting

feedback from the public".

The success of the project was evidenced by the number of people who turned up at the venues to avail themselves of tests. A total of 83 people were tested at the Olympic Centre, 131 at Super Centre and 150 at Emerald City.

Patrons were also given demonstrations on Heart Saver First Aid and Basic Life Support by staff and volunteers of the Foundation, and, were able to pick up a variety of material relating to the work and activities of the Foundation in combating heart disease and stroke, also with information on the Foundation's many training programmes in emergency cardiac care.

Refreshments were provided by Pine Hill Dairy and Powerade, who offered samples of their health related products. A variety of health foods, particularly fruit, were provided by the BOA.

Tobacco control in Barbados

TOBACCO use is not perceived to be a big problem in relation to other health priorities. Indeed, the fact that Barbados has a relatively low level of tobacco consumption may send the message that the battle has been won. Although there is currently still no legislation prohibiting smoking in public places or workplaces, most non-hospitality sector workplaces are smoke-free and non-smoking is an accepted norm in the Barbadian society. Barbados signed the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in June 2004, indicating support for tobacco control and ratified the convention in November 2005, thereby creating an obligation to implement tobacco controls. In addition, tax increases are imposed from time to time, the latest when the Prime Minister increased the duty levied on cigarettes by 100 per cent in last year's Budget.

However, there is very little regulation of tobacco products. There are few restrictions on advertising and promotion. Tobacco promotion at point of sale is common, with Benson and Hedges being one of the most popular brands offered. There are no requirements for health warnings on tobacco packages, although tobacco companies often place very weak ones on a voluntary basis, partly to protect themselves from litigation.

Ironically, the factors that give rise to the perception that tobacco use is not a big problem in Barbados – low prevalence of smoking, many workplaces are voluntarily smoke-free spaces, and the absence of local tobacco growing and small scale manufacturing – are the very factors that create an excellent environment in which to implement strong tobacco control policies.

Effective policies such as a ban on tobacco advertising and a ban on smoking in public places and workplaces are imminently feasible. As more and more governments ratify the FCTC and strengthen the regulatory framework around tobacco use and promotion in their respective countries, tobacco companies will operate much more aggressively in those countries where

regulations are weaker. Barbados is a prime target given its high visibility as a tourist destination. Preventive action must be taken now before it is too late.

There is no guarantee that tobacco use in Barbados will remain low. Indeed, as more governments ratify the FCTC and implement stronger tobacco control regulations in their respective countries, tobacco companies will look to expand their markets in countries where regulations are weaker and non-existent.

The tobacco industry concentrates on influencing the political process at the national and regional levels by arguing that tobacco controls will hurt the economy, while projecting smoking as socially acceptable so as to increase consumption. The companies that promote these sticks of disease, disability and death will fight to minimise regulations and craftily avoid public criticism and liability. Poor tobacco control is like inviting a fox into your yard to count your chickens.

Protect against the global agent of disease, disability and death.

The Government of Barbados, led by the Ministry of Health, must continue the process toward implementation of the FCTC. This should include examining existing legislation and anticipating the legislative and programme actions that will be needed to bring Barbados into compliance with the FCTC. The three commitments with specific time deadlines in the FCTC are the requirement for graphic health warnings covering at least 50 per cent of the surface of tobacco packaging within three years of ratification, a prohibition on tobacco advertising, including indirect advertising and sponsorships, within five years and enacting a ban on smoking in public places at least 3 years after ratifying.

The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados would like to point out most strongly that Barbados having ratified in November 2005 we are falling behind in our commitment to implement the treaty in a timely manner.

THE HEART & STROKE FOUNDATION OF BARBADOS INVITES YOU TO

Evening of Music UNDER THE STARS

Come and enjoy the delightful sounds of

▶ **VSOP Dixieland Jazz Band**

▶ **The Barbados Defence Force Band**

▶ **Plus an Auction with an attractive selection of items**

At **Holder's Great House**
St. James
Monday 16th March 2009
From 7:00 p.m.



TICKETS \$60.00

Available from A&B Music Supplies, Sheraton, Holder's box office, Treasure Beach Hotel, Cobblers Cove Hotel and the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados

The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados' annual fundraising concert is kindly sponsored by RBC Royal Bank of Canada

