

CARPHA introduces new CARICOM-approved hospitality industry standards for the region

TOBAGO, TRINIDAD, November 21, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Building upon the Caribbean's innovative and successful partnership between tourism and health, the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) has launched the first CARICOM (Caribbean Community)-approved health safety and environmental sanitation (HSE) hospitality standards to improve health, safety, and environmental quality in the regional hospitality sector, funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

The standards – which include Food Safety and Sanitation; Energy Management; Water Treatment and Management; Sewage Treatment and Management; Solid Waste Management; Integrated Pest Management; and Environmental Management Systems – were unveiled by CARPHA at the Magdalena Grand Beach and Golf Resort in Tobago on Monday, November 14, with the support of senior officials of the Tobago government, the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA).

Dr. Joy St. John, CARPHA's Executive Director, who earlier this year signed an agreement with the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) to further develop the standards, said these seven regional clean and green standards are a key component for providing assurance to travelers about company commitment to health and safety and towards avoiding or mitigating health threats to the Caribbean tourism product.



HSE Standards Launch in Tobago



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Each of the standards is equipped with an assessment checklist to easily guide the industry through a process of recognizing and achieving the standards. Upon completion, after verification by CARPHA, the company will be eligible to receive CARPHA's Tourism Health Program (THP) Healthier, Safer Tourism Award.

"There is now a verifiable way of having the suite of standards act as a crucial tool for establishing the quality of Caribbean tourism," Dr. St. John stated.

Health and tourism professionals throughout the Caribbean have placed a high priority on the well-being and health and safety of the industry's employees and travelers. Through the intervention of a unique partnership with CTO and CHTA, established by CARPHA in 2014, the Caribbean was well positioned to respond strategically during the pandemic and now during its recovery.

In 2020 and 2021, CARPHA also trained 7,000 hospitality professionals in preventing and controlling COVID-19 in the tourism sector. This contributed to the Caribbean tourism product's ability to rebound quickly after the end of the "lockdown" phase of the pandemic.

The standards are currently voluntary and certified properties that meet all seven standards will be eligible for a platinum distinction.

Dr. Lisa Indar, CARPHA's Director of the Surveillance Disease Prevention and Control Division - who recently facilitated THP stakeholder training in preparation for the Tobago carnival last month - was congratulated by senior officials for her leadership and commitment to the process of standards development since 2018.

Dr. Faith B. Yisrael, Deputy Chief Secretary and Secretary for Health, Wellness and Social Protection, Division of Health, Wellness and Social Protection, Tobago House of Assembly, congratulated CARPHA and its partners for developing the standards. She encouraged tourism stakeholders to utilize them and not leave them on shelves gathering dust: "If we pull together and if we actually follow these robust standards ... we would all really truly survive whatever is to come next."

Councillor Tashia Burris, Secretary for Tourism, Culture, Antiquities and Transportation, Division of Tourism, Culture, Antiquities and Transportation, Tobago House of Assembly, said the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that having robust policies, standards and regulations can help save lives and livelihoods.

Neil Walters, Acting CTO Secretary General, believes the standards are another incremental step towards ensuring the future of the region's tourism sector: "I believe we are laying the foundation for a more sustainable, world-class, regional tourism sector as this very important sector moves forward in its recovery."

Frank Comito, Special Advisor to CHTA, which has supported the health and safety awards program from its inception, noted that the standards can uplift the tourism industry's continued commitment to the health and safety of its employees and visitors, "which can help us to deliver our promise to the world and there is no better place for mental, physical and spiritual well-being than in the Caribbean."

About the Caribbean Public Health Agency

The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) is the new single regional public health agency for the Caribbean. It was legally established in July 2011 by an Intergovernmental Agreement signed by Caribbean Member States and began operation in January 2013. The Agency is the Caribbean region's collective response to strengthening and reorienting its health system approach so that it is equipped to address the changing nature of public health challenges. The approach is people-centered and evidence-informed. For more information visit www.carpha.org.

Source: Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)

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Image caption:

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