



Volunteer members of the Heart & Stroke Foundation.

Who to lead the war on fat?



Heart & Stroke Foundation CEO Gina Pitts.

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In the face of evidence of a ballooning nation of people, the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados is asking whether it is the job of the public sector or private enterprise to return the country to a healthy state.

"Should the role of Government be limited to providing advice and information, or should legislation be used to enforce changes in food consumption and its availability, as we have done for tobacco?" asks Heart & Stroke president Humphrey Metzgen.

He backdropped his question with some pale statistics for this island. "Fifteen per cent of the adult population is engaged in binge drinking; 90 per cent of adults do not consume the recommended five servings of fruit and vegetables per day; 50 per cent are physically inactive, accounting for two in three women and one in three men; 43 per cent of the population is overweight or obese."

Metzgen brought up the issue of uncertainty on who has the lead role of raising the health level of Barbadians as he addressed the annual general meeting of the Heart & Stroke Foundation yesterday.

On that occasion there was also a presentation by clinical neuropsychologist Dr Toni Nicholls, who spoke on the way damage to the brain can promote the malfunctioning of a person.

Though there was no specific reference to what happens to the brain sitting atop a malfunctioning obese body, Metzgen hastened to add that despite the damning statistics, there however has been some recent activity towards righting the fattening nation.

"I must point out Barbados has not been idle, and is the first in the Caribbean with the development of the Non-Communicable Disease Commission itself to introduce a tax on sugar, and on sugar-sweetened beverages."

Becoming overweight is recognized as the forerunner to the onset of a multiplicity of ailments that are widespread in Barbados: from diabetes to heart problems. And, in addition to justifying the current call for a war against fat, Metzgen pointed out that societies had been seeing this condition for centuries.



Explaining that the term "obese" stems from the Latin "obesus", "meaning having eaten oneself fat", he noted that most fatness was acquired from eating the wrong foods.

"In certain jobs — the armed forces being one — obesity was once considered a self-inflicted injury that might lead to a disciplinary hearing.

"We also know from medical statisticians that unless something is done soon, obesity in the next 25 years will become the biggest threat to health services."

The foundation president called for a master plan to encourage better eating habits among Barbadians.

"The alternative will be longer waiting lists of patients with diabetes, cardiovascular problems, high blood pressure and cancer."

It is fair to say that the Heart & Stroke Foundation's staff and volunteers are not just sitting in the **Hassell & Symmonds Cardiac Care Centre** on Jemmott's Lane and wringing hands at Barbados' foreboding future.

"The Heart & Stroke Foundation is looking at a number of different options, including launching Barbados' first healthy food and drink outlet. We have identified a suitable building with a good customer potential."

This is an aggressive plan because the foundation will set its health oasis plumb in the middle of a typical Barbados greasy desert.

"Currently, the area is serviced by a number of small mobile outlets providing sweetened drinks and a variety of fast food, mostly high in calories."

But in answer to Metzgen's question on who is to lead in the war on fat, there is information of a joint NGO-government leadership.

The foundation's chief executive Gina Pitts spoke of collaboration "with our partners both from governmental agencies and civil society organizations".

"The Cardiovascular Disease Prevention And Rehabilitation Unit saw 168 persons admitted, compared to 58 in the period 2012 to 2013," she said, adding that 30 per cent of these patients had come through the Ministry of Health.

But she notes that the outlook from the point of view of this three-decade-old organization remained challenging.

"Now in 2015 we are seeing a difference all around with technology making us all the more sedentary, and the next generation knowing all fast foods and little maths.

"So 30 years on from our inception, there is still so much work to be completed."

 we are hiring

We are looking for dynamic, positive and reliable staff to join our team. Please only apply if you are motivated, have an interest in healthy lifestyles, and enjoy delivering a high standard of customer service.

As a Brito's team member, you will be trained and guided by our philosophy. Whilst experience is not essential, if you have experience in being a barista, juicing, food prepping, serving, cashiering, and cooking, it will be highly desirable.

For us, it is all about hiring people with passion, drive, and the right attitude. We believe in loving your job and paying the bills, therefore your hard work and dedication will be adequately rewarded.

If you wish to be a member of our team, please send your CV and application letter to britoseatfitavenue@gmail.com before September 15th 2015.

juice right

 our philosophy is simple...

We want to offer something for those who want to get more from their food. Our menu will be featuring raw juices, shakes, salads, wraps, paninis, specialty dishes and coffee.

eat better.
feel better.
be better.



Clinical neuropsychologist Dr. Toni Nicholls.



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Heart & Stroke Foundation president Humphrey Metzgen.