

Dangleben Container Issue

In 2024, I began a mission to donate two mammogram machines and other essential medical supplies to the people of Dominica. My engagement with Minister Laville and then-Permanent Secretary (PS) Esprit was cordial, productive, and marked by mutual respect. However, a shift occurred when Dr. Kyra Paul assumed the role of PS. The change in communication and willingness to collaborate has raised concerns that must be shared publicly in the interest of transparency and accountability especially since the ministry chose to make a statement. The statement conveniently states conversations began in May but I have been assisting and communicating since summer of 2024. This did not start with the new PS who I think became the obstruction.

I did not provide an exact list and emailed the new PS the list that left the port of Baltimore. I also sent her an email with a general list of the items since the container had already shipped. I was hoping that she would still be willing to work with me in getting these well needed items to the hospital. I am releasing these conversations in all clarity and accountability. I sent two mammograms to Dominica and paid out of my pocket for the truck to pick them up from Pennsylvania to Washington DC . I sent several items down that I never bragged about because I knew they were going to beneficial use for the people, especially the orthopedic plaster.

I am grateful I was able to clear my container and have things on island to help our people. The items are on island and who needs them can access them.

This is long but it will clarify the entire timeline of what happened. Also of note, the reason the mammograms and the orthopedic plasters were donated it was because there was a need . The entire amount of items I donated in October were not itemized nor did I have to provide any invoices and exact inventory.

Also, to date after donating two mammograms, I have not gotten any update on whether they even made it to Dominica . The shipping company informed me a while back that they left Baltimore.

FULL TRANSCRIPT OF CONVERSATIONS

[2024 CONVERSATION WITH OLD PS]

October 14th

I am Dr Esprit..from La Dominique. Please let me know when u have a chance to talk. It's in connection to a possible donation of a mammogram.

(Voice notes and calls)

Oct 20th

My text: Hi - I sorted out all the stuff and have several boxes for the hospital. I am available Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

Plaster for casting, J splints, Chloraprep, Betadine, OR towels, Etc ...

Her response: Thanks doc. will inform before i visit.

SHE PICKED UP THE DONATIONS

Nov 29th

My text: Back on island for the funeral. I packed these and will leave them with my uncle.
(pic of items)

Her response: Greetings doc. Welcome home. Received with thanks. Will do

Dec 5th

My text: Morning - hope all is well. we are leaving tomorrow. I gave my uncle the Items for you.

Also would appreciate a list of needed items as I get inventory.

Her response: Hey doc i am well.will work with cms to get u the list. Thanks for all your effort

Dec 17th 2024

Her text: Doc good morning to you. Trust your Tuesday is wonderful. Do you by chance have specs for both mamo and baby warmer?

Her response: Thats amazing stuff doc. I informed the hon minister. Grateful for your dedication and perseverance in getting us the equipment. Thank you on behalf of the ministry.

Jan 2025

My message: I need to check if the mammogram were crated for shipment. I still plan on moving ahead with the medical distribution with my uncle this year.

Her response: Hey doc. Nice hearing from u. We collected stuff from uncle this week and sent to the hospital. Received with appreciation.

March 30th

Her message: Monday is my last day as the permanent secretary. Her name is Dr Kyra Paul.

[CONVERSATION WITH MINISTER OF HEALTH]

April 1st onward:

Extensive and professional communication efforts about the donation, the container shipment, setup of a medical supply store, and desire to collaborate. Despite early support, communication dwindled and responses delayed or stopped

April 1st

Hi Mr Laville hope all is well with you and family . Dr Esprit has informed me she is no longer in the PS role . As per our discussion last year I do look forward to continuing to help out . The pallets I donated last year I am sure went to good use . They were mostly orthopedic items. I will be shipping a container with a variety of items soon. Some household items for my father's house but quite a few medical supplies also. As I told Dr. Esprit my goal was to open a small medical supplies area to help facilitate with items that may be needed urgently. They would be available on island immediately. I am placing a significant amount of items in there to donate to the hospital. None of these are expired items and would go a long way in the system . With that said I am also looking forward ways to collaborate and also some discount on clearance of the container since I will be donating to the country . This is my way of giving back to my country. I do hope we can work together on this independently. Please let me know what some of the needs are and I will see how I can help out . Have a great day .

Minister : Greetings to you. Thanks for reaching out. I appreciate all your help and your tremendous facilitation. This means a lot. Ian is also a good guy. He will certainly help.

May 17

Morning - I am opening a small medical supply distribution. We outfitted a building in pointe Michel that we will have medical supplies available- I had spoken to Dr Esprit about helping in terms of supplies to clinics etc and even stuff for the hospital if needed . I no longer have contact for Dr Esprit and my communication with the PS goes unanswered . As you know I did donate an entire pallet of orthopedic supplies that the PS picked up in November. I will have much more on the container to donate . I was awaiting a list of items from the PS in terms of needs but never received . I believe that the small business will be beneficial to the collective and we can all work together. The opening will be June 14th , 2-5 pm . I will send the actual invitation soon with all the details.

Have a great weekend.

NO RESPONSE

JUNE 6

I am hoping to hear back from you. The container has really essential things to donate . I hope we can go through and give the items that's most needed .

JUNE 10

Greeting. PS advised that she has been talking to you on the matter and has already given clear direction as to what entails.

MY RESPONSE

I sent the email a while back to her and no response after that . I sent the packing list . I can't consign to the ministry the entire container. I said am willing to give a large amount of the

medical supply to the hospital . I need to clear the container and if I have to pay for everything in terms of duty i will but then what ?

(I Emailed List to PS)

This was part of the email I sent on 5/29 . A detailed invoice of every item at this time is not possible . I can't consign do that after the fact if needed . It's a lot of supply that would be very beneficial to the system .

June 10-18th

PATIENT CHOICE OPENED WENT WELL CONTAINER DELAYED

JUNE 19th

Minister : Good morning. Hope your week has been going well. Unfortunately I will need to reschedule our meeting later. Was hoping to have a dinner meeting. Unfortunately my secretary inadvertently double booked me. My other engagement is a public meeting. I know you leave on Saturday and it may be difficult to meet. If you so happen to be in town tomorrow please reach out. Maybe we can meet for a bit.

Me: Ok understood . I do want to discuss the container . The folks at ACS told me it's best to consign it to your department it's easier. I just want to ensure that all my other items especially for my dad's house and some inventory for the business will be secured. I will be back hopefully on July 2nd . The container gets there then . I do have a lot of items for the hospital . Tomorrow may be tight - I may be heading to Grandbay .

Minister : Thanks for understanding. We will certainly make the time to resolve all of this quickly. I will revert to my team and get back to you asap.

My response : Thanks again - I am Heading out but will be back in 2 weeks . I am hoping we can sort of the container issue out before then . Thanks again . Enjoy the weekend

June 23

My text : Morning - I am trying to buy a ticket to come back next week just for the container , I need to call AC Shillingford today for an update . I need to know how we move forward with getting things to the hospital and same time getting my restock items and things for my dad's house. I don't want to travel back for 4 days and don't get things done .

NO RESPONSE

June 26

My text: Hoping to hear from you soon. Have a great day

NO RESPONSE

June 27th

My text : Coming back July 1-10th

Minister :Greetings. Hope you are well. Thanks very much for the update. I trust that things are working out fine. I spoke with PS earlier and she advised that you all continue to maintain contact. Kindly follow her guidance with the process. Let me know if you have challenges.

My response: This is where we left it . The suggestion I made of going through together and donating the items and valuating was not accepted . She is not willing to work with me on the situation as it is and is asking for a specific and accurate count . So honestly I don't know what else I can do . As I told Dr Darroux, I am willing to give my time to education , conferences and symposiums and working to source other much needed items .

I am not asking for any special treatment. I just want to ensure the medical items for the hospital doesn't go to waste . This is an opportunity for us to truly work together. I had to make significant changes in my schedule and also significant cost to return in short time - I really want this to work out for all of us . Thanks again for your support

June 30th

My text : Morning - hope all is well . I booked a flight for tomorrow. The PS has not worked with me on resolving this. I am baffled on why . What do I do now? I want this to work out. The items I want to donate is significant and it should also open pathway for future donations and projects . I am doing this for country and as I stated prior I want any items send whether donated or in my business benefits the economy- no monies will leave Dominica on my project .I have a short window to clear the container . There are a few things we can chat about in terms or healthcare . I hope we can have a meet when I get back down .

July 1st

My text : Hi - hope all is well . I really hope you can help out . I missed my connection out of Miami due to weather today and will be on ground tomorrow . I heard container came in today .

July 2nd

Minister : Greetings. I hope all goes well with your flight today.

My text: Just landed - the container is here - what do I do with the items I was supposed to donate to hospital ? Why can I get I not some help with this ?

CONVERSATION WITH NEW PS OF HEALTH

MAY 28th

Good morning Ms Paul . Hope all is well . I am Dr Dale Dangleben . I was in touch with Dr Esprit and also Mr Laville . I donated a pallet of items last year through Dr Esprit and also the two mammograms . I messaged Mr Laville about the container I am sending to Dominica . I do have quite a few things to donate to the hospital in there . I would need a letter from your department to get customs/duty free clearance. Let me know if this is something you can assist with . I would also want to have a conversation with you on what I had discussed with Dr Esprit in terms of opening a small medical supplies store. Looking forward to hearing from you .

Dale A. Dangleben, MD FACS

Her response

Hi Dr Dale. Thanks for your donations.

There is a donations policy that would have to be activated.

In the meantime, can you share the list of specific items to be donated to the hospital from your container?

My response

Ok thanks for the prompt response . I am at a trauma conference all day will send to you tomorrow morning .

For the pallet i donated last fall , I wasn't aware of the policy . Please educate me on that please .

Also , any update on the mammograms ?

Thanks again .

Her response

Ok i await the list.

Typically, items to be donated to the hospital or the Ministry should be consigned to the name of the Ministry with a written donation offer with a list of the items and the values of the items listed. Note that this could via e-mail and an invoice, if purchased.

The consignment has to be for the sole use of the Ministry or hospital to benefit from automatic waiver. Hence the reason for the itemization.

For other medical consignments, there is the avenue to seek a waiver of duties through Ministry of Finance or Head policy.

Finally we have been able to resolve the wire transfer challenge of the shipment of the Mammogram; we are awaiting confirmation of receipt before the actual items are shipped.

EMAILED HER THE GENERAL LIST IN THE INTERIM

NO RESPONSE

June 24th

My text : Morning , hope all is well . the container was delayed and will be delivered around July 2nd . I spoke to Mr Laville on how best to proceed. If I consign the entire container to the Ministry of Health , how do I facilitate getting my other items that's for me ?

Her response : Good morning

You are to provide a listing of the items with quantity to be assigned to the ministry. There can be different consignments in the container. The entire container cannot be on the Ministry's name if not all of the items are for the ministry

My Response : Unfortunately- I don't have the exact amounts to provide an accurate list. The general list I sent is a large amount of items that would be very beneficial to the system . I was thinking we all can go through the items and give to the hospital what's needed and value them then . I know that's backwards but at this point it's the best option . I have already left and I would hate to see such valuable medical items go to waste . I just want this to work out .

Her response

No sir. This is not the procedure

(that was all she said . Note she never responded to the email I had sent)

July 3rd

My response:

Morning I am back in Dominica and about to clear the container . So there is no way I can get the concession to get the stuff for the hospital ?

Her last text to me

Mr Dangleben

Is it that the process is not clear? What exactly is unclear? This is not a new process in the Government's system and we have never had any difficulty with that process with anyone. I am lost as to what you are asking of me

CONVERSATION WITH FS

May 28th

Good morning Ms Edwards . Hope all is well . I am Dr Dale Dangleben . I was in touch with Dr Esprit when she was the PS of Health and also spoke to Mr Laville . I donated a pallet of items last year to the hospital through Dr Esprit and also the two mammograms that's on its way. I messaged Mr Laville about the container I am sending to Dominica . I do have quite a few things to donate to the hospital in there . I would need a letter from your department to get customs/duty free clearance. Let me know if this is something you can assist with . Looking forward to hearing from you . Thanks

Dale A. Dangleben, MD FACS

Her response :

Good afternoon you. I am well and hope you are too. Many thanks for your contribution. The process is simple once you consign the goods to the Ministry of Health no import duty or VAT would be charged. You would need however to send them a correspondence listing the goods and stating that they are being donated.

CONCLUSION

I will continue to help Dominica . The lack of concessions did not hurt me financially and I am thankful I have the means to give back . However, I am very disappointed in the lack of proper communication and effort . It would have been great if we could have done this in collaborative spirit for our people ! Also it would be common courtesy to notify me on whether you received the mammogram that my health system donated and I paid out of pocket to deliver to the shipping company in Baltimore.

Opportunity is looking back from whence we came and giving back . Don't forget that . God Bless Dominica and hopefully her light can shine .