



COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH, WELLNESS AND SOCIAL SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION

Tel: (767) 266 3357
Fax: (767) 440 7761
E-mail: minsechealth@dominica.gov.dm
Website: www.dominica.gov.dm

4th Floor, Government Headquarters
Kennedy Avenue
Roseau
Commonwealth of Dominica

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dominica Strengthens Laboratory Capacity Following Launch of Landmark Pandemic Preparedness Initiative



Roseau, Dominica (Wednesday, February 11, 2026)- The Ministry of Health, Wellness and Social Services, last week, marked the official handover of essential laboratory equipment and supplies to the National Laboratory, procured through the Pandemic Fund and the Fleming Fund, further strengthening Dominica's capacity for disease surveillance, diagnosis, and emergency response.



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The donated items, valued at approximately eighty-five thousand dollars (US\$85,000), were procured by the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) and include advanced microbiology and molecular laboratory equipment such as a VITEK 2 system, vertical freezer, PCR consumables, pipette kits, microcentrifuge, and specialized laboratory consumables.

Craig Henry, Senior Laboratory Technologist in Microbiology at the National Laboratory, expressed gratitude for the donation.

“The Dominica National Medical Laboratory is enormously grateful to the Pan American Health Organization... As we may already know, antimicrobial resistance, AMR, is a global threat, and we in Dominica are not spared from engaging this invisible enemy,” he stated.

“Fortunately, through the efforts of PAHO and the Fleming Fund, our arsenal has been significantly bolstered with a nuclear weapon in the form of the Vitek 2 compact instrument. The Vitek 2 compact is an accurate and rapid system for identification of microorganisms, that is, bacteria and fungi, and the determination of which antimicrobials will be effective at treating infections by these organisms. The addition of this cutting-edge piece of equipment to our workflow has significantly enhanced our diagnostic capacity.”

Henry further noted the impact this donation will have on the services offered by the laboratory.



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“The laboratory can now routinely identify organisms to species level, and for the first time, fungal susceptibility is done routinely. With this technology, it means that clinicians can now receive antibiotic treatment options in a shorter space of time, which greatly enhances patient outcome. Additionally, the system helps support infection prevention and control by allowing reliable and rapid identification of inpatients with multidrug-resistant bacterial infection, so that they can be isolated and quarantined.”

The system includes an integrated patient data management database and the capacity to generate antibiograms, significantly strengthening antimicrobial stewardship efforts at the Dominica China Friendship Hospital and across the country.

This handover coincides with a series of high-level engagements under the Pandemic Fund, including a follow-up meeting on Thursday, February 5, between PAHO/WHO, key Ministry of Health officials and development partners to advance activities to be implemented under the Fund.



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The donation also aligns with the landmark regional initiative launched last year in Saint Lucia: “Strengthening Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Emerging Health Threats in the Eastern Caribbean.” The multi-country project will benefit Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and represents a major step forward in strengthening pandemic resilience across the region.

Submitted jointly by PAHO/WHO, FAO, and the World Bank on behalf of the six independent OECS Member States, the project is funded through the Pandemic Fund, established in 2022 in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic to support low- and middle-income countries in



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strengthening systems for pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response.

The project is guided by the One Health approach, recognizing the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health.

During the launching ceremony, Dr. Amalia Del Riego, PAHO/WHO Representative for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, emphasized the importance of a collaborative approach to healthcare.

“This launch marks a major milestone for the Eastern Caribbean region. By embracing a One Health approach and reinforcing our systems together, we are building a future where countries can detect, respond to, and prevent emerging threats more effectively, protecting lives and livelihoods.”

For Dominica, the laboratory donation represents a tangible and timely investment in national health security, ensuring the country is better equipped to prevent, detect, and respond quickly and decisively to future public health threats.

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For more information, please contact:

Ms. Sheena Harry

Communications Officer

Ministry of Health, Wellness and Social Services

harrys@dominica.gov.dm

767-315-9868