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**REPORT OF THE STANDING PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
ON THE REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL ON
HSA OUTPATIENT PHARMACY SERVICES (NOVEMBER 2021)**

1. REFERENCE

The Standing Public Accounts Committee of the Cayman Islands Parliament, established under Standing Order 77(1), met to consider the following Report prepared and submitted by the Auditor General:

- *HSA Outpatient Pharmacy Services (November 2021)*

2. DOCUMENT CONSIDERED

In accordance with the provision of Standing Order 77(3), the Committee considered the following Report which was referred in the House of Parliament:

- *HSA Outpatient Pharmacy Services (November 2021)*

3. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

The following Members of Parliament are the present Members of the Standing Public Accounts Committee:

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, JP, MP - Chairman
Ms. Barbara E. Conolly, JP, MP
Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour, JP, MP
Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, MP
Ms. Heather D. Boddin, OCI, Cert. Hon., JP, MP
Mr. Isaac D. Rankine, MP

4. MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee held four (4) meetings to consider this Report on:

- (i) 12th November 2021 (*Administrative Meeting*)
- (ii) 10th January 2022 (*Administrative Meeting*)
- (iii) 12th January 2022 (*Hearing*)
- (iv) 13th January 2022 (*Hearing*)

5. ATTENDANCE OF MEMBERS

The attendance of Members at the meetings is recorded in the Minutes of Proceedings which are attached to and form part of this Report.

6. PERSONS IN ATTENDANCE

In accordance with Standing Order 77(8), the following persons were in attendance at the meeting held with witnesses.

- Mrs. Sue Winspear - Auditor General, Office of the Auditor General
- Ms. Angela Cullen - Deputy Auditor General (Performance Audit), Office of the Auditor General
- Ms. Jasmine Williams – Audit Project Leader, Office of the Auditor General
- Mr. Ruel Huet – Audit Project Leader, Office of the Auditor General
- Mr. Kenneth Jefferson - Financial Secretary / Chief Officer, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
- Mr. Michael Nixon – Senior Assistant Financial Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
- Mr. Matthew Tibbetts - Accountant General, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

7. WITNESSES CALLED BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 77(4), the Committee invited persons to give information and explanations to assist the Committee in the performance of its duties.

The following persons appeared before the Committee to give evidence on **12th January 2022**:

- Dr. Courtney Cummings – Acting Medical Director, Cayman Islands Health Services Authority
- Mr. Colin Medford – Chief Pharmacist, Cayman Islands Health Services Authority
- Mrs. Dawn Cummings – Former Chief Financial Officer
- Mr. Ronnie Dunn – Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Interim Chief Financial Officer, Cayman Islands Health Services Authority
- Ms. Lizzette Yearwood – Chief Executive Officer, Cayman Islands Health Services Authority

The following persons appeared before the Committee to give evidence on **13th January 2022**:

- Dr. Marla Barnes-Small – Chair of the Pharmacy Council, Healthcare Pharmacy
- Mrs. Nellie Pouchie - Chief Officer, Ministry of Health and Wellness
- Hon. Franz Manderson, MBE, Cert. Hon., JP – Deputy Governor and Head of the Civil Service, Cayman Islands Government

8. PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee agreed that in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 77(6), all meetings at which witnesses were invited to provide information should be held in an open forum. This decision was taken to promote openness and accountability in Government.

9. GOVERNMENT MINUTE

The Public Accounts Committee wishes to draw Government's attention to Standing Order 77 sub-order 7 which reads:

"The Government Minute shall be laid on the Table of the House within three months of the laying of the report of the Committee and of the report of the Auditor General to which it relates."

The PAC expects the Government to honour the requirements of this Standing Order.

10. PAC RECOMMENDATIONS

On review of the Office of the Auditor General's Report *HSA Outpatient Pharmacy Services (November 2021)*, and on critical analysis of two days of witness testimonies and deliberations amongst the Committee Members, the PAC endorses and supports the Auditor General and her team's nineteen (19) recommendations: three (3) recommendations for the Ministry of Health and Wellness, and sixteen (16) recommendations for the Health Services Authority.

The PAC makes the following additional recommendations:

- i. The PAC heard evidence that the *Pharmacy Act 1979* is significantly outdated and creates risks for the safety and quality of drugs used in the Cayman Islands. The Committee heard that one area of international advancement is in the area of alternative or complementary medicines, which is not covered by the current *Pharmacy Act*. The Committee heard that the Ministry had received comments on the *Pharmacy Act* and the Ministry committed to finalize draft legislation to take to the Cabinet during 2022. The Committee also heard that due to technological advancements in the pharmaceuticals industry that legislation should be reviewed and updated every five years.

The PAC recommends that the Government ensures that the revised *Pharmacy Act* adequately covers the importation and use of alternative or complementary medicines.

The PAC recommends that the Government reviews the *Pharmacy Act* at least every five years to ensure that it is in line with international best practice and industry standards.

- ii. The PAC explored reasons why the HSA did not accept the OAG's recommendation number 10, which stated that the HSA should reconsider the recommendations made by the consultant in 2014 that had not been accepted or implemented. The consultant's recommendations included bundling together patient prescriptions with a view to reducing the number of times a patient has to visit the pharmacy each month, and increasing the quantity of medication prescribed at a time to at least 2-3 months' supply. The Committee was not convinced by the evidence it heard about

the reasons for not implementing these recommendations as they seemed to apply to a minority of patients. The Committee appreciates that this may be problematic for some patients but should be able to be implemented for the majority of patients. The Committee also believes that this could improve efficiency and free up resources to focus on other services, for example, expanding the delivery service to across the whole of Grand Cayman.

The PAC recommends that the HSA revisit the 2014 recommendations made by the Consultant that were not accepted at the time (reference OAG recommendation 10) and implement them for the majority, if not all, pharmacy patients.

- iii. The PAC heard that the HSA had further developed key performance indicators (KPIs) for the pharmacy service and made these available to pharmacy staff. The HSA provided the Committee with a copy of the KPIs shared with staff but the Committee has concerns about how these will be monitored and reported. The Committee heard evidence that performance against these KPIs was now being monitored and reported to the HSA's senior management and Board and requested to see a copy of a Board performance report. The Committee believes that the public should be aware of the KPIs and how the pharmacy service is performing against these.

The PAC recommends that the HSA publishes the KPIs for pharmacy in all pharmacy locations so that the public are aware of these.

The PAC recommends that the HSA regularly publishes performance against the pharmacy KPIs. This could be done by publishing the actual performance against KPIs in each pharmacy location.

- iv. The PAC heard from the Chief Officer of the Ministry of Health and Wellness that despite previous commitments given in September 2021 that continued staffing problems had resulted in delays in starting to develop a national strategy for healthcare and that although work was progressing on revising some legislation, a review of the *Health Practice Act* had yet to start. The Committee heard that recruitment to fill a number of posts was ongoing and that the Chief Officer would be in a better position to update on progress by the end of the first quarter of 2022.

The PAC recommends that the Chief Officer of the Ministry of Health and Wellness provides a formal update to the Committee as at the end of March 2022 on progress with the development of a national health strategy and revising the legal framework for healthcare.

- v. The PAC heard that the Office of the Deputy Governor had assumed responsibility for coordinating and submitting Government Minutes to formally respond to PAC reports and that these would be done in a timely manner. The Committee welcomes this approach; however, the Committee also heard that one reason for the delays in submitting Government Minutes by the deadline is that they are currently reviewed and approved by the Cabinet prior to submission. The Committee acknowledges that the Cabinet may need to approve some responses, for example, those that have financial consequences; however, most responses are from senior civil servants, as the responsible owner for the recommendations. The Deputy Governor committed to explore the option of including Government Minutes as Cabinet Notes for information rather than Cabinet Papers for approval.

The PAC recommends that the Deputy Governor reports back to the Committee on whether the process for submitting Government Minutes via the Cabinet has been changed. If the process has not changed, the Deputy Governor should explain how he will ensure that Government Minutes are submitted within the timeframe required by the Parliament's Standing Orders.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee is most appreciative of the efforts of the Auditor General and her staff for the support, assistance and constructive advice given throughout its deliberations.

The Committee also wishes to thank the staff of the Parliament for the assistance provided.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TO THE HOUSE

The Committee agrees that this Report be the Report of the Standing Public Accounts Committee to the House on the following Report of the Office of the Auditor General:

- *HSA Outpatient Pharmacy Services (November 2021)*

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, JP, MP - Chairman

Ms. Barbara E. Conolly, JP, MP – Member

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour, JP, MP – Member

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, MP - Member

Ms. Heather D. Boddin, OCI, Cert. Hon., JP, MP – Member

Mr. Isaac D. Rankine, MP – Member