

# THE PUBLIC HEALTH STRENGTHENING PROJECT IN GUYANA

**Public Health Strengthening in Guyana (PHSG)** is a Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)-funded bilateral project between the governments of Canada and Guyana executed by the Canadian Society for International Health (CSIH) in collaboration with the Guyana Ministry of Health (MOH).

The **Project's goal** is to improve and maintain the health of Guyana's population by supporting an integrated approach to disease prevention, diagnosis, management, and care at both the national and regional levels.

The **Project's purpose** is to strengthen the public health system by enhancing the capacity of the Government of Guyana to better manage, deliver, and monitor disease prevention and control programs in the areas of STI/HIV/AIDS/TB, and to effectively plan, manage, and evaluate health care services.

## Canadian Society for International Health

The Canadian Society for International Health (CSIH) is a national non-governmental organization with members committed to the promotion of international health and development. The Society serves as an umbrella organization for Canadian experts in all health disciplines and as an executing agency for international health and development projects.

CSIH members offer a solid network of experts and experience with the Canadian government, international agencies, non-governmental organizations, and academia.

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**HIV/AIDS/STI/TB** - PHSG focuses on strengthening the local capacity to deliver and sustain programs designed to prevent and manage STI, HIV/AIDS, and TB. To this end, National Guidelines have been established for all three conditions, an STI baseline pathogens survey is underway to accurately determine the types and extent of STI in Guyana, and a study of groups at high risk for HIV was completed with the objective of improving access to care. Training, mentoring, and counseling on STI, HIV/AIDS, and TB are continuous. The Train-the-Trainer approach is favoured.



Attendees of the 1st Annual National TB Conference in Georgetown hosted by PHSG and the Guyana Chest Society

**PHSG** also assists with the implementation and expansion of the Directly Observed Treatment Shortcourse (DOTS) program for TB treatment. The Project established a network of STI and TB laboratories, including a central lab with the capacity to do cultures for STI and TB. The abilities to do cultures and link with external reference laboratories help to determine the extent of drug resistance and impact on future treatments and guidelines. A 2006-2011 National Plan for TB has been developed in collaboration with the National TB Program (NTP). PHSG also works with all educational institutions in Guyana to ensure that training and new standards of care are sustained.



Training technologists on STI and TB diagnostics

## Developing a Health Information System

**Developing a HIS** - This component of PHSG focuses on establishing an electronic health information system (HIS) to support the collection, storage, and communication of health data, and the processing of that data into health information. Version 0.6 (out of 1.0) of the database has been installed and is being piloted in three clinics in Georgetown. Over 70 database users from the three clinics have received training in database applications, and the software is currently being rolled out to New Amsterdam and Linden. In addition, the MOH has been fully networked and several of its employees have been trained.



NetCorps intern Alam Khan helps staff at the Genitourinary Medical Clinic learn how to use the new system

**Home-Based Care** - Training and enhancing capacity for the delivery of home-based and palliative care to TB and HIV/AIDS patients is the focus of this Project component. As such, National HBC Guidelines and modules for trainers have been developed. PHSG has also been instrumental in developing a National Home-Based Care Strategy with the Ministry of Health, as well as assisting in its implementation, and the training of nursing coordinators, volunteers, and family members.



Home-based care orientation meeting in 2005

