

**GREETINGS BY:**  
**THE HONOURABLE, DR. RISHAD SEECHERAN**  
**MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

**Batting Against Cancer – Charity Cricket Fete Match**

**Saturday, 19th July 2025 | 3:00 P.M.**

**Queen's Park Cricket Club**

Good afternoon,

It is an honour to be here with you today. I bring warm greetings on behalf of the Honourable Minister of Health, Dr. Lackram Bodoie, who unfortunately could not be here today but has asked me to extend his best wishes and full support for this inspiring initiative.

Today's event is more than a cricket match; it represents hope, unity and the urgent need to act in the face of a growing national health challenge. According to the 2024 Trinidad and Tobago Non-Communicable Diseases Risk Factor Survey, cancer remains the second leading cause of death locally, with breast, prostate and colorectal cancers among the most prevalent. When cancers are diagnosed early, treatment is more effective, survival rates are significantly higher and the overall quality of life improves for patients and their families. Alarming, over 4,000 new cases are diagnosed annually and lives are lost due to late detection.

According to the 2003 - 2020 Cancer Report, over 43,000 persons were diagnosed with cancer in Trinidad and Tobago, with 97.9% of cases occurring in adults over the age of 25. The highest burden falls between the ages of 60 and 74, highlighting the urgent need for sustained, age-

appropriate intervention strategies. In 2020 alone, the country recorded its highest annual incidence, with 3,225 new cancer cases, numbers that reflect real people, real families and real loss.

One of the most impactful tools in this early prevention effort is the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, which plays an important role in preventing cervical cancer, one of the leading cancers affecting women in our country. By vaccinating adolescents, both girls and boys, we can drastically reduce the risk of HPV-related cancers later in life.

The Ministry of Health remains committed to increasing access to the HPV vaccine and dispelling misinformation, ensuring our youth are protected from preventable cancers.

With over 53.8% of our population under the age of 35, the decisions we make today will shape our nation's health tomorrow. Let us continue working together; government, civil society, healthcare professionals, survivors and supporters, to ensure that no one faces cancer alone.

That is why initiatives like this cricket match is so critical. Events like these amplify our shared mission to raise awareness, encourage early detection and support patients and families affected by cancer throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

On behalf of the Ministry of Health, I commend you for your continued dedication and leadership in cancer education and outreach. Your efforts align closely with our Ministry's goals of reducing the burden of non-communicable diseases and building a healthier, more resilient population.

I hope that today's event inspire action, hope and continued progress in our fight against cancer.

Thank you, and enjoy the match!