

**FEATURE ADDRESS BY
THE HONOURABLE, DR. LACKRAM BODOE
MINISTER OF HEALTH**

**SCHOOL OF PHARMACY OATH-TAKING CEREMONY
FACULTY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, UWI**

**AMPHITHEATRE A, ERIC WILLIAMS MEDICAL
SCIENCES COMPLEX, MOUNT HOPE
FRIDAY 11TH JULY 2025
TIME: 5:00 P.M.**

Good evening

It is an honour to stand before you today as Minister of Health and as a fellow healthcare professional. Today marks a significant milestone in your lives, the day you formally commit yourselves to the noble and essential profession of pharmacy.

The oath you are about to take is more than a tradition; it is a sacred promise. A promise to uphold ethics, advance knowledge and serve with compassion. You are joining a profession that is not only critical to the health system but also central to its future.

Pharmacists are often the first and sometimes the only healthcare professionals a patient will encounter. Your role is not just about dispensing medication; it is about ensuring safe use, preventing harm, managing chronic disease and educating

patients. You are caretakers of trust, stewards of science and partners in care.

This calling comes at a pivotal time in healthcare, one shaped by global challenges, evolving technology and increasing demands for quality, accessibility and equity.

As we work toward Universal Health Coverage, as outlined in the World Health Organization's Sustainable Development Goals, pharmacists will be instrumental in bridging the gap between medicine and the public.

Your training has equipped you with a strong scientific foundation, but it is your compassion, ethics and resilience that will guide you on your journey. There will be days when you feel overwhelmed, by shortages, by system inefficiencies, by the complexities of care. In those moments, I urge you to remember that your role is indispensable and your contribution, invaluable.

The Ministry of Health is actively working to improve systems that affect your practice. We are modernizing the Chronic Disease Assistance Programme (CDAP) to ensure relevance, efficiency and clinical appropriateness. We are tackling stock outs and wastage, expanding rural access to pharmaceutical services and exploring technological solutions such as automated dispensing and inventory management.

These initiatives are not theoretical; they need your expertise, your insight and your voice. We see pharmacists not as support staff but as co-leaders in the transformation of our healthcare system. Your input is vital in policy formulation, research, regulatory improvements, and innovation.

A recent partnership with the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission signals our commitment to strengthening the quality and safety of our medicine supply chain. However, for that system to succeed it must be driven by professionals like you, pharmacists with integrity, vision and an unwavering commitment to patient care.

Let your education be your foundation, but let your compassion be your compass. Let science guide your hand, but let empathy guide your heart.

To the families, faculty, and mentors who supported these graduates, thank you. Your sacrifices and encouragement have helped shape the healthcare leaders of tomorrow.

To the Class of 2025, congratulations. You have earned your place in this profession. Remember: today is not a destination; it is the beginning of a lifelong commitment to excellence and service.

Go forth boldly. Practice wisely. Serve humbly. Moreover, let your oath today echo in every life you touch.

Thank you and may your journey in pharmacy be one of purpose, growth and lasting impact.