

World Malaria Day 2021 (April 25)

Minister's Message

Theme: “Zero Malaria starts with me.”

Malaria remains a health concern globally; nevertheless, the World Health Organization (WHO) has reported great success with over 7 billion lives saved while preventing over 1 billion cases worldwide. Today, as we commemorate World Malaria Day, there is a great need for each of us to embrace the theme “Zero Malaria Starts with Me”. All stakeholders, including mining and logging organizations and other persons who live in areas where there is active malaria transmission, are invited to play an active role in the fight against this scourge.

While the past year has been particularly challenging for malaria elimination efforts due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its ripple effects, we have continued to forge forward by ensuring that healthcare workers have the required personal protective equipment and diagnostic and treatment supplies to continue quality service delivery.

The National Malaria Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025, in keeping with the mandate to eliminate falciparum malaria by 2025, and in alignment with the Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2015 -2030, considers the success of malaria elimination efforts to be hinged on three pillars: a) universal access to malaria case management (diagnostic and treatment) services; b) universal access to the vector control interventions. Guyana has identified the use of the long-lasting insecticide-treated nets (LLINs) to at-risk populations as the primary vector control intervention against the anopheles; and, c) transforming surveillance into an intervention and tool.

To improve access to case management services, the Ministry of Health has designed and started implementing an innovative initiative to train laypeople (miners, loggers and community members) to test for malaria using a rapid diagnostic test and treat uncomplicated positives in keeping with national guidelines. Over the following weeks, the Ministry of Health, through various actors, will be training 120 malaria service deliverers (laypeople) to test and treat malaria in remote areas.

Moreover, the Ministry of Health has planned and will start to implement from May to June a mass distribution of long-lasting insecticide-treated nets (LLINs) to the at-risk population in Regions 1, 7, 8, 9 and 10. Approximately 95 000 LLINs will be distributed to persons from all communities across these regions at the end of the mass campaign. Importantly, all of these services are delivered free of charge by the Ministry.

Other critical interventions include the roll-out of an early warning system and programmes to improve health-seeking malaria-related behaviours to improve health outcomes and the implementation of an early warning system in affected communities to ensure sustainable delivery of equitable malaria services to vulnerable populations.

Additionally, we continue to monitor the threat of the emergence of resistance to artemisinin-based antimalarials through regular therapeutic efficacy surveys. The Ministry of Health is committed to malaria elimination. Let us all adopt the initiative to “draw the line against Malaria” by embracing this year’s theme - “Zero Malaria starts with me”.