

OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR



**LAUNCH OF UNIVERSITY OF GHANA-UNIVERSITY OF WEST INDIES JOINT
MEDICAL PROGRAMME & PUBLIC LECTURE**

ADDRESS BY:

**PROFESSOR NANA ABA APPIAH AMFO
VICE - CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

TUES. NOV. 22, 2023

GREAT HALL

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA



- Head of Mission, High Commission of Barbados in Accra, Your Excellency Mrs. Juliette Babb-Riley,
- Provost, College of Health Sciences, Prof. Julius Fobil,
- Other Provosts, Deans, and Directors present,
- Dean, University of West Indies Medical School - Dr. Damian Cohall,
- Dean, University of Ghana Medical School, Prof. Alfred Edwin Yawson,
- Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of West Indies and Our Distinguished Speaker for this Lecture, Dr. Kenneth Connell,
- Faculty of the University of Ghana Medical School,
- Staff and Students of the University of Ghana,
- The Media,
- Specially Invited Guests,
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon to you all.

It is an honor to Chair the launch of the Joint University of Ghana – University of West Indies Transnational Medical Programme and Public Lecture.

In June 2019, His Excellency President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo visited Barbados and other Caribbean countries to strengthen bilateral relations with the Afro-Caribbean. During the visit, the President held talks with officials of the

University of the West Indies (UWI) where the idea of student and faculty exchange and Joint Medical Programme were discussed.

The University of Ghana, the premier university in Ghana, with its internationalization agenda seized the opportunity and sent a delegation led by the then Pro Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Samuel Kwame Offei, and former Dean of the University of Ghana Medical School, Prof. Margaret Lartey to the West Indies to explore academic linkages which birthed the relationship to establish the Joint Medical Programme - UG-UWI Joint Transnational Medical Programme.

The six-year joint medical programme is designed to allow students to complete the first three years of their studies at the University of the West Indies, leading to the award of a BSc. Medical Science degree by the University of the West Indies. Students who successfully complete the BSc. Programme would be admitted to the fourth year of the MBChB programme at the University of Ghana Medical School for the clinical phase of their training. Upon completion, the student will be awarded a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery degree from the University of Ghana.

The establishment of the exchange programme would also enable staff and students from the University of Ghana and the University of West Indies to collaborate in ground-breaking research and teaching and learning. They will also exchange knowledge and access resources and learning opportunities available to both institutions.

The process leading up to the fruition of this partnership has not been without challenges as it is to be expected of any human endeavor, but with tenacity and commitment, the University of Ghana Medical School has obtained accreditation for the programme, signed a three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and completed its first batch of admissions.

Ladies and gentlemen, today we witness the media launch of the University of Ghana – University of West Indies Joint Transnational Medical Programme and also enjoy a Public Lecture on one of the topical medical issues of recent times on the theme: “***From Bridgetown to Accra: Hypertension as a threat to the Diaspora: Lessons from COVID***”. It is my belief that this launch will serve as a major springboard to the realization of the vision of promoting international visibility for our universities and a new chapter in the academic journey for both universities through increased collaboration in other academic spheres.

This transnational medical programme is one of the innovative ways the University is contributing to developing human resource capacity to improve healthcare delivery in Ghana and beyond. This collaboration provides an excellent opportunity for cross-cultural learning which will make graduates of this programme well-rounded and ready to work in different cultural settings.

Your Excellency, invited guests, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I will now turn my attention to the public lecture soon to be delivered. The rise in non-communicable diseases is a worrying trend affecting, most especially low- and middle-income countries. Hypertension is a major contributing factor to most

heart-related clinical conditions. According to the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the overall prevalence of high blood pressure is relatively higher among non-Hispanic black adults, compared with non-Hispanic white adults.

As a university which seeks to remain increasingly relevant to addressing national and global issues, platforms such as these are often created to throw the spotlight on these health challenges and advocate preventive and remedial measures to curb them. As part of activities marking the University of Ghana's 75th anniversary, the University of Ghana co-hosted an insightful public lecture with the Harvard University Centre for African Studies on "*Combatting Noncommunicable Diseases; Africa's Greatest Health Challenge*" delivered by a globally renowned expert in noncommunicable disease at the London School of Hygiene, Prof. Peter Lampitey.

In today's lecture, we are privileged to have the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of West Indies, Dr. Kenneth Connell as our distinguished speaker. His presentation will focus on an escalating public health concern for people of African descent, commonly referred to as BP in Ghana. With the advent of COVID-19, the world's attention and focus largely drifted to dealing with the infectious disease with huge resource allocation, often to the detriment of non-communicable diseases such as hypertension. This lecture will therefore critically assess this health condition post COVID-19. The lecture will thoroughly dissect the disease burden of BP and its deadly outcomes but more

importantly, explore indigenous measures to ensure that all hands are on deck in fighting it.

I welcome you all warmly once again to the University of Ghana and look forward to a stimulating lecture. Enjoy the rest of the proceedings.

Prof. Nana Aba Appiah Amfo

Vice-Chancellor

(November 22, 2023)