

## **Health Conditions in the Caribbean**

The countries and territories of the Caribbean area have a long tradition of collective action. This tradition was embodied in the formation of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in the early 1970s, and later was strengthened by the initiative known as Caribbean Cooperation in Health (CCH). In *Health Conditions in the Caribbean*, the Pan American Health Organization presents an overview of the challenges and conditions faced by health systems in the CARICOM member countries (the English-speaking Caribbean and Suriname).

The book consists of two major sections and an appendix of statistical tables. Section I, which comprises seven chapters, highlights the general health status of the Caribbean people and its social context, as well as policies and legislation that impact health programs. The first two chapters cover the socioeconomic and political situation and include morbidity and mortality statistics. The following chapter deals with two of the priorities of the CCH initiative: health infrastructure and human resources development. Other chapters cover the history and development of health legislation in the sub-region; health promotion; and women, health and development.

Section II describes those health program areas which correspond to the major causes of morbidity and mortality in the Caribbean. Five of the eight chapters concern priorities identified by the CCH: maternal and child health, food and nutrition, control of non-communicable diseases, AIDS prevention and control, and environmental protection, including disaster management. The remaining chapters focus on the elderly - a growing segment of the populations of these countries - mental health, and oral health.

The result of painstaking data collection and investigations by public health experts from across the sub-region, *Health Conditions in the Caribbean* meets the needs of decision-makers who require accurate information about health trends for the purpose of policy development, health planning, and investment in health projects. Practitioners and students of health disciplines, researchers, and members of the media will also find this publication a useful and accurate resource.

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