

TTRNA PRESIDENT MEETS WITH NATIONAL NURSING ADVISOR



**Mrs. Bettyann Pilgrim National Nursing Advisor (NNA) at left greets
TTRNA President Mr. Idi Stuart**

Mr. Idi Stuart met with the newly installed National Nursing Advisor (NNA), Mrs. Bettyann Pilgrim on Friday 22nd November 2017. Mr. Stuart congratulated Mrs. Pilgrim on her appointment as of November 1st, 2017 and took the opportunity to share some issues that are of grave concern to TTRNA and by extension the nursing and midwifery community.

The NNA, formally the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) is considered the highest post a nurse can hold in their country. This person is the direct advisor to the Minister of Health on all nursing and midwifery matters. However, this position remained vacant for more than two (2) years, as the previous office holder Dr. Oscar Ocho, left to become the Director of Nursing Education for the University of the West Indies (UWI) Trinidad and Tobago.

This new position of NNA, was created recently due to the absence of promotional possibilities for nurses to fill the CNO portfolio, as they would have originally emanated from Ministry of Health nursing personnel. Since there no longer exist Ministry of Health nurses, with the creation of the Regional Health Authority (RHA), a vacuum was created. Through constant lobbying by both

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past and present TTRNA executives, the Minister of Health made a wise decision to create and fill the contract position of National Nursing Advisor (NNA).

Mr. Stuart highlighted some major issues that have negatively impacted the nursing community, which included: the issuance of temporary contract employment for Nursing Personnel, the starting of 'Pool employment for newly graduate nurses in NCRHA', and an inadequate interfacility ambulance service within the Regional Health Authorities.

The President did not fail to discuss the prospect of nursing specialities and the goal of ensuring that the first entry qualification to nursing should be a BScN, in accordance with international standards. Mr. Stuart also expressed shock and disappointment that the office of NNA, is now no longer housed within the Ministry of Health head office on Park Street. This has been the custom to facilitate face to face discussions and real-time collaborations with key stakeholders, who are also housed at the Head office. This offsite location will bring with it additionally challenges for the office holder, and TTRNA views this yet another snub to the nursing and midwifery profession.

TTRNA will be writing to the Permanent Secretary of Health to have this oversight corrected with haste. Ms. Pilgrim also revealed a 100 day plan she has intention of initiating. Highlights of this plan was shared by Ms. Pilgrim and the Association looks forward to its activation and expected benefits. On behalf of the Trinidad and Tobago Registered Nurses Association we extend congratulations to Ms. Pilgrim on her appointment and anticipates a mutually rewarding collaboration for the benefit and advancement of not only Nursing and Midwifery personnel, but the wider health care in Trinidad and Tobago.

