

Hotels running dry

A top industry spokeswoman says the vital hotel sector has not been spared the impact of recent dry taps.

Chief Executive Officer of the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association Sue Springer reports that properties along the West and North coasts have been hardest hit by "water shortages and water outages", which yesterday prompted Government to announce a much-needed remedial plan, in the face of worsening drought conditions.

This includes the launch of the St Philip Water Augmentation project, the addition of eight water tankers to the Barbados Water Authority's (BWA) current fleet and the installation of two packaged desalination plants to help to ease the distress, which is also being experienced by residents in

northern communities.

While pointing out that hotels as far north as the Almond Beach Resort in St Peter to Tamarind in Payne's Bay, St James were feeling the impact, Springer said they have had to rely on water provided by BVVA tankers. She said some hoteliers, which currently do not have storage tanks on their properties, have been forced to extract water from their swimming pools for the flushing of toilets.

"We encourage, where possible, for hotels to increase their water storage capacity, but unfortunately for some of the hotels they have no land area available for actually doing that. And we will have to see how that can be facilitated within their footprint of their property," she told **Barbados TODAY. (MM)**

Marietta Carrington, Director of human resource, communication and client development at The Substance Abuse Foundation Inc.



Official wants provision for drug addiction in health plans

The local business community is being urged to give more support to drug addicts.

Marietta Carrington, Director of Human Resource, Communication and Client Development at The Substance Abuse Foundation Inc. warned today that drug addiction was an organizational, family, community and national disease that was getting worse.

And she suggested that corporate health plans should make provision for treatment of the problem.

Addressing a drug addiction sensitization workshop at Verdun House, St John, themed **Workplace Addiction and Mental Health: An Employer's Response**, Carrington said while it might be difficult to convince insurance companies to get on board, she believed the proposal was still worthy of serious consideration.

"I know we will have the fight ups with the insurance companies but we had a fight up with them a few years ago with respect to pap smears because they saw that as not necessary as opposed to seeing it as preventative. So if we have to have a fight up with them we are going to have that fight up with them, but health plans, we consider that a part of certainly the conversation we want to have with our colleagues," she said.

Clinical Director Jacqui Lewis could not say how widespread the problem of addiction was in Barbados, but noted that since Verdun House opened in 2000 it had treated over 8,000 addicts.

Lewis said the aim of today's seminar, which attracted participation from about six companies, was to help organizations better understand addiction, including what signs to look for in the workplace and how to treat the problem.

During her presentation, clinical supervisor Dr Jerine Griffith outlined the various types of addictions, warning that while addiction of substances such as sugar, alcohol and drugs were commonly known, process addictions, related to video gaming, the Internet, social media and the like, were becoming more prevalent among young people. **(MM)**

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Dr Agard calls

Former Opposition Shadow Minister of Health Dr Maria Agard has said she was saddened but not surprised by reports of two recent maternal deaths at the state-run Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH).

In fact, she said it was a tragic reminder that Barbados is slipping on a number of critical fronts.

She pointed to the findings of the **2013 UNICEF State of the World's Children's Report** in which Barbados registered 51 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, its highest in 20 years.

That report also notes that the island's mortality rate for under five rose to 20 deaths per 1000, and that its rate of