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# INSIDE TVET

VICE-PRESIDENT of the Barbados Elderly Care Association Dr Edwin Thompson, delivering a presentation to the health care assistants attending BECA's Employment and Training Fund subsidised course on Care of the Elderly. (GP)



## Improving care of elderly in Barbados



THE Employment and Training Fund's business development officer Carol Ann Burke (right) in discussion with the president of the Barbados Elderly Care Association Maureen Ward, at the end of last Thursday's class on the care of the elderly. (GP)

SINCE 2008 the Barbados Elderly Care Association (BECA), with the assistance of the **TVET Council**, has been working to improve the standard of care available in local senior citizens' homes.

BECA is an umbrella organisation established in 2002 to represent the interests of the owners and managers of nursing homes and senior citizens homes.

Founding member and President Maureen Ward explained: "We have 62 senior citizens homes in Barbados in addition to those people who work in a private capacity. We need to have a cadre of people who work in the field who are competent."

It is with this goal in mind that BECA engaged the assistance of the **TVET Council** to design a training programme based on the occupational standards contained in the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in the Care of the Older Adult Level 2, to meet the needs of more than 600 health care assistants.

Ward noted: "This is the third group of trainees. There are approximately 25 persons in the class and they are all health care assistants or nursing auxiliaries with senior citizens homes. The purpose of the programme is to improve the knowledge and skills so that they can become more competent at their jobs."

She added: "On-the-job training that is guided by standards is very

important. BECA has 35 senior citizens homes registered as members and the trainees in this programme work primarily with BECA's members. BECA, with the help of the **TVET Council**, is ensuring that all of its members' employees are trained, certified and competent to do their jobs."

The programme, which runs from October 2010 to July 2011, comprises 36 weeks of theory and 20 weeks of practicals. Topics include **Anatomy and Physiology, Occupational Safety and Health, Ethical Behaviour for Health Care Workers, Foot Care of Older Individuals, Dementia - Alzheimers and First Aid.**

### Key programme

BECA's Vice-President Dr Edwin Thompson noted that home owners as well as their staff attend the training programme.

"The General Nursing Council (GNC) registers care givers for all senior citizens homes. Two years ago it began registering care givers in all of the nursing homes. Today, however, in order for new persons to be registered as care givers they have to possess a certificate that the GNC approves of."

Thompson said: "BECA wanted to standardise the training of care givers so that everyone would function at the same level. That is one of our goals, to standardise the training of care givers responsible for the care of the



A CROSS SECTION of the 25 trainees enrolled in BECA's 2010 - 2011 Care of the Elderly course for Health Care Assistants. (GP)

elderly so that they are better equipped to perform their jobs."

He stressed that the organisation also placed great emphasis on the practical training because "the practical training is very important to compliment the theory that is taught."

The president and vice-president disclosed that the use of the occupational standards to guide the training of the care givers was only the first step. They said that BECA had applied to the **TVET Council** to become an Assessment Centre for the **NVQ in Care of the Older Adult Level 2,**

and, was at present going through the process to have its training programme recognised by the General Nursing Council.

The organisation also intends to apply to the Barbados Accreditation Council to become a registered training provider.

### Subsidised course

In keeping with the **TVET Council's** mandate to promote and support education and training to national, regional and international standards, the Council is subsidising the cost of

BECA's competence-based care of the elderly course through the Employment and Training Fund which is managed by the Council.

The ETF provides training grants to applicants who comprise employers, registered training institutions and employer/employee associations that have met specified criteria.

Key criteria include up-to-date National Insurance contributions and training that is conducted according to a competence-based format utilising occupational standards.