

October 25, 2017

**STATEMENT BY HSA BOARD CHAIRMAN**

The Board recognizes recent statements in the public domain which could create public anxieties, distrust and questions about the competence and qualifications of the senior leadership team at the Health Services Authority.

Before addressing the specific issues which are currently in the public domain, it is important to put in context the leadership challenges faced by the HSA over the years.

Prior to the appointment of the current senior leadership team of the HSA, there was a revolving door within the management team at the organization with as many as six CEO’s in six years, and an equal turnover in Chief Financial Officers, HR Directors and Medical Director.

It is the dedication and leadership of the existing management team, the oversight and accountability and strategic leadership by the Board which has reversed the dire opinion of the Auditor General only a few years ago: **"Had this been a business, we would have filed for bankruptcy long ago."** to the current state where the HSA’s financial position has been vastly improved, there is leadership stability, improvements in employee morale and increased patient confidence.

The Board is confident that the actions and strategic direction established will lead to a clean audit opinion in 2018 and the long term sustainability of the HSA.

As the matter of the qualifications of certain members of the leadership team was the subject of extensive discussion by the Public Accounts Committee which has created public skepticism about the training and experience of the CFO and CEO, it is necessary for the Board to address this issue.

The previous Board of the HSA took a deliberate strategy to restore a Caymanian leadership team at the HSA, which this Board views as commendable and is fully committed to carrying forward and restate our full confidence and support of the CFO and CEO in carrying out their respective responsibilities.

The current CEO took on the role in 2009 after a period of significant turmoil within the HSA.

During her tenure there has been a welcomed rebirth and fundamental transformation in the trust, confidence and working relationship between the Board and the executive leadership of the H.S.A. as well as with our business partners and the public.

Her tenure has marked the most stable period for the Authority at any time since its inception in 2002.

Mrs. Yearwood has been instrumental in guiding the H.S.A during some of the most dynamically changing and challenging times and has shown a remarkable ability to provide steady leadership in meeting the many challenges and opportunities which we have dealt with during her tenure.

The CEO has the full support of the Board of Directors and has shown competence and excellence in all areas of her responsibilities. Her dedication and leadership is exemplary and she should be commended for spearheading the entire team at the HSA in the turnaround of the organization with the full support of the Board.

Mrs. Yearwood’s appointment was part of a deliberate strategy of succession planning adopted by the previous Board to succeed an expatriate who occupied the post of CEO, which we fully endorse to have Caymanians take on leadership roles within the HSA. Mrs. Yearwood served in numerous roles in the organization and pursued post-graduate studies leading to a Masters in Health Administration in preparation for her current role.

The Board feels strongly that such a strategy to develop young Caymanians to positions of executive leadership should be encouraged across all entities in the Cayman Islands and applauded and supported by our electors, including the members of the Public Accounts Committee.

The Chief Financial Officer was first employed by the HSA in a temporary capacity as Finance Officer and in subsequent years when the vacancy for Chief Financial Officer arose, she was hired after an exhaustive recruitment process, including credential review and evaluation and a formal interview process which included a panel of internal and external personnel with knowledge of finance and the requirements for the job.

Contrary to statements made in the public domain, the Chief Financial Officer possesses the requisite skills, qualifications and experience for the position including certification by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) the global body for professional accountants and is also a Certified Chartered Accountant.

Her extensive experience in a range of diverse industries provided her the breadth of skills and knowledge, and experience to benefit the HSA, reflected in the fact that the Auditor General has been able to highlight the positive impact of her work on the organization’s financial reports since her tenure. This is significant from the years when the Audit reports reflect unflattering comments about the finances of the HSA.

# **PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS**

The Board wishes to clarify recent statements regarding personnel appointments within the HSA, and the clear delineation of responsibilities between the Board and the executive leadership as outlined in the Public Authority’s Law, with regards to personnel appointments and the day-to-day operational running of the organization.

Section 31. 2 (c) of The Public Authorities Law, delegates responsibility for the day to day management of the public authority including, the hiring, management and dismissal of staff, and other personnel management functions to the Chief Executive Officer.

The Board has full confidence in the management of the Authority to exercise all personnel decision.

The Board is also pleased that for the first time since the inception of the HSA the senior leadership now comprise 99% Caymanians or persons with Caymanian status and more than 57% of our staff are now Caymanians; the highest number in the history of the organization.

# **HIRING AND PROMOTION OF CAYMANIANS**

The Board is committed recruitment and promotion of Caymanians within the service, including at the senior leadership level.

The Board is pleased that for the first time since the inception of the HSA the senior leadership now comprises 99% Caymanians or persons with Caymanian status and more than 57% of our staff are now Caymanians; the highest number in the history of the organization.

Jonathan Tibbetts
Chairman
Health Services Authority