



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

QEH TO GET \$166 000 KERATOCONUS MACHINE FROM FIRSTCARIBBEAN COMTRUST FOUNDATION

Bridgetown, Barbados, August 27, 2019 - If all goes as planned, come World Sight Day 2019, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital should have its first ever Pentogram Tomography Machine.

The state of the art ophthalmology machine, worth around BDS\$166 000 represents the latest technology in eye examination and will be able to perform 3D investigations of the eye and be used to diagnose Keratoconus - a progressive condition where the normally round cornea takes on a cone like shape that causes visual impairment and ultra-sensitivity to light.

Founder and Trustee of Keratoconus Barbados (KC), Roseanne Myers, on accepting a cheque to cover the cost of the machine from Colette Delaney, CEO of CIBC FirstCaribbean and Chair of the bank's Comtrust Foundation, said that her aim was to get the machine in Barbados and installed to celebrate World Sight Day on October 10th this year.

The short ceremony was attended by bank officials, members of the management committee and board of trustees of the registered charity and by Director of Medical Services at the QEH, Mr. Tony Harris and Head of the Ophthalmology Department Dr. Sherwin Benskin.

The patient support and advocacy group, was founded in February 2019 with the objectives of raising awareness of the condition, raising funds to be better able to diagnose the disease and to create a body of research using Caribbean people infected with the condition.

Mrs. Myers explained that Keratoconus used to be termed 'a rare disease' but the group has been finding out that it is not as rare as first imagined. In fact, there are a number of people, including young children, both in Barbados and in the OECS that are affected by the condition.

She stated that a number of cases, especially in children, goes undiagnosed because of the absence of a machine at the QEH. "The acquisition of this machine can also create another area for medical tourism as there are already a number of regional nationals who come to Barbados for eye treatment and this machine will be able to facilitate more of them" she added. "My vision is to make Barbados the facility for best practice in the management of KC in the region."

CIBC FirstCaribbean's chief executive officer, Colette Delaney in handing over the cheque said that when the Foundation heard about the need for the machine and the number of people that it could help in Barbados and the region, they were delighted to assist.

She called on Corporate Caribbean to help in this regard and urged KC Barbados to get its story out there. Mrs. Delaney explained that the bank would be giving the money not just to buy the machine but also to ensure that there was three years of maintenance added to the cost to ensure that the machine was looked after and properly maintained during that initial period.

Mrs. Myers also explained that KC Barbados was planning a number of fundraising outreach activities including a Vision Care Expo and a charity golf event where two blind golfers will play alongside sighted golfers to raise awareness, the proceeds of which will fund diagnoses for children as well as the corrective scleral contact lenses that are needed by those who have the eye ailment.

Ends



Captions: Standing From Left: Trudy King Chief Accountant at the Bank; Debra King Head of Corporate Communications at the Bank; Keisha Russell-Grannum, Sandra Stuart, Dwayne Goddard and Shelley Boyce all from KC Barbados, Dr Benskin and Annette Slocombe from the QEH

Sitting front from Left: Managing Director Barbados and OECS Donna Wellington; Roseann Myers, CIBC FirstCaribbean CEO Colette Delaney and Tony Harris

About CIBC FirstCaribbean

CIBC FirstCaribbean is a relationship bank offering a full range of market leading financial services through our Corporate and Investment Banking, Retail and Business Banking and Wealth Management segments. We are located in sixteen (16) countries around the Caribbean, providing the banking services that fit our customers' lives through approximately 3,000 employees in 68 branches and offices. We are one of the largest regionally listed financial services institutions in the English and Dutch speaking Caribbean, with over US\$11 billion in assets and market capitalization of US \$2 billion. We also have an office in Hong Kong. The face of banking is changing throughout the world and CIBC FirstCaribbean intends to lead these changes with the expertise, integrity and knowledge gained from banking in the Caribbean since 1836.

CIBC FirstCaribbean is a member of the CIBC Group. CIBC is a leading Canadian-based global financial institution with 11 million personal banking and business clients. Through our three major business units - Retail and Business Banking, Wealth Management and Capital Markets - CIBC offers a full range of products and services through its comprehensive electronic banking network, branches and offices across Canada with offices in the United States and around the world.

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