PARLIAMENT
OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO. 19
Answered on 24th July 2024
Fourth Meeting 2023-2024 Session - Third Sitting

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION
ASKED BY

MS. BARBARA E. CONOLLY, NP, JP - ELECTED MEMBER FOR THE CONSTITUENCY OF GEORGE TOWN SOUTH

TO

THE HON. SABRINA T. TURNER, MP - MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR HEALTH & WELLNESS, AND HOME AFFAIRS

QUESTION:

Can the Honourable Minister update the House on the timeline for the opening of Poinciana, the new long-term residential mental health facility, and confirm what plans have been put in place for the safe repatriation of Caymanian patients currently being treated in overseas facilities, to the new facility?

ANSWER:

Mister Speaker, with the utmost respect to the Honourable Members of this House and the wider public, I will not provide yet another estimated timeframe for the completion of Poinciana Rehabilitation Centre as that remains beyond my control and the remit of my Ministerial team. Thus, I cannot provide a timeline for the grand opening of the facility, as that will only happen once it has been fully handed over to the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

What I can say, Mister Speaker, is that my Ministerial team was informed that on Monday, July 22nd, the Department of Planning issued a Special Permission to Occupy (SPO) for three buildings within Poinciana. These are the Administration Building, Cafeteria and Activity Centre, Mister Speaker.

While I appreciate that this is not the update that we had all hoped for, this is a step in the right direction, Mister Speaker. By being able to move into the facility, Poinciana employees- of which we now have 22- will be able to begin important preparations to receive clients. Up until now, Poinciana employees have focused on policy development, procurement of equipment, training, orientation and skills development. Once on the grounds of the facility Poinciana staff will be able to set-up administrative functions, conduct site orientations, and complete site-specific training and drills, among numerous other things.

For the benefit of the listening public, Mister Speaker, the issuance of an SPO from the Department of Planning means that the structure satisfies all life-safety requirements, such as mechanical, electrical and fire.

Being granted an SPO allows approved personnel, such as staff, safe use of the building while the inspection process continues and until the final Certificate of Occupancy is issued.

Receiving the SPO is a project milestone and it brings us one step closer to opening our doors. At the location, the Director of Poinciana will be finalising the internal procedures and activities needed to accommodate the facility's residents. Once these procedures are in place, and the necessary building approvals have been granted for the residential sections of the facility, phase two will focus on repatriation and admission of residents.

This brings me to the repatriation of Caymanians being treated overseas, Mister Speaker. In the first instance, arrangements will be made for the return of those who currently reside in the Jamaica group home as Poinciana's Director has visited those residents on more than one occasion, and assessments of their needs and immigration status have been completed. By immigration status, Mister Speaker, I mean that some residents require travel documents, and as such further discussions have been held with the Passport and Corporate Services to assist in preparing relevant paper work. When an admission date is in fact confirmed, the Director of Poinciana and her team will make the appropriate arrangements, including those related to travel. It is expected, Mister Speaker, that residents will be accompanied by Poinciana's staff throughout their return journey to ensure a safe transition and a positive experience as they return home.