



## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**WHAT:** Barbados' primary, acute care medical facility

**WHERE:** Bridgetown, Barbados

**WEBSITE:** [www.qehconnect.com](http://www.qehconnect.com)

# Queen Elizabeth Hospital - Barbados

## *Getting better together*

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) is Barbados' primary acute care medical facility, as well as an accredited teaching hospital affiliated with the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill campus. The institution was opened on November 14, 1964. "We celebrated 50 years in 2014," says hospital CEO, Dr. Dexter James. "We started with 464 beds and today we have 600 beds, providing a wide range of medical, diagnostic, and therapeutic services."

Regarding its surgical services, in addition to general surgery, James says that QEH also offers minimal invasive surgery, urology, ENT (ear, nose, and throat), gynecology, cardio-thoracic, orthopedic, dental, ophthalmology, and neurosurgery. "So there's quite a range of surgery that we currently provide that can meet the needs of the population," James says. "There are very few cases that we now refer overseas for care and these are mainly patients that require cardiology in-

terventions and a very, very few, if any, neurosurgical cases. We have two neurosurgeons, two cardiovascular surgeons, and seven or eight specialists in ophthalmology - apart from general adult ophthalmology, we have pediatric ophthalmology, ocular plastics, corneal, retinal, and neuro-ophthalmology. So there are a number of specialties for eyes. In the case of obstetrics and gynecology, we now have consultants in high risk pregnancies, and we have a consultant in gyne-oncology who addresses all 'below-the-belt' cancers in women."

Queen Elizabeth Hospital has 2,100 employees. "It's the largest single employer of public officers in any one space," James states. "We are a stand-alone facility with a number of departments having outpatient

clinics within the hospital. So, surgery has its own outpatient clinics, as do pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, and, of course, internal medicine. So, when patients are seen and surgical interventions are done, and patients are discharged from the hospital, they are then seen in outpatient clinics within the hospital, and within the respective specialty where the procedure was done."

Because Barbados practices a socialized model of healthcare, akin to the same type of model found in the UK and Canada, any Barbadian national or permanent resident of the island can take advantage of any of QEH's services at no charge. "It is funded by taxation," James says. "Once you are a citizen or permanent resident, healthcare is free at the point of delivery - you don't pay anything at all for healthcare. We receive our allocation as approved by Parliament and funds are then dispersed to us from the Treasury via the Ministry of Finance. Those funds are allocated across the hospitals and health clinics in the country. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital has been set up as a statutory body, and therefore, we have a Board of Directors and an executive management team responsible for the operations and management of the hospital. So we can partially direct how our funds are utilized to improve the quality of services and where our priorities lie in