

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION 109/2010

4 August 2010

The accusations levelled at Opposition Member Fabian Picardo by the Government in response to our press release about bed shortages at the hospital shows that the GSD are unable to defend their policies without resorting to undignified and improper comment. This is designed only to divert attention from the many failings of the health policy of the Government in general and of Minister Del Agua and Chief Executive David McCutcheon in particular. It should be noted that Mr Picardo has previously made no public comment about this case at all and has cleared with the family of his client that he can do so in reply to this unprovoked attack.

It is totally untrue for anyone in the Government to say that Mr Picardo sought to place undue duress on Mr McCutcheon in any instance. All Mr Picardo did was ring Mr McCutcheon to ask why an 83 year old man had been discharged from hospital when he was obviously unwell and the discharge would put him in breach of Court imposed bail conditions. Mr McCutcheon and Mr Picardo then held a cordial five minute conversation discussing the case.

Moreover, it should be explicitly clear to the public and to the authorities that:

The 83 year old patient in question was left outside of his home in his pyjamas because Mr McCutcheon appears to have given the order that he be removed from St Bernard's Hospital without checking if there was anyone at his residential address;

It would be incredible that Mr McCutcheon's did not know that acting in this manner would result in the 83 year old patient in question being put in breach of his bail conditions, which calls into question whether a person in a senior management position in a public organisation such as the GHA should have acted in such manner;

The said 83 year old patient was considered by some within the GHA to have medical conditions that required him to remain hospitalised and that Mr McCutcheon, who has not practiced medicine for many years, decided he should be discharged.

Mr Picardo therefore entirely refutes the totally unsubstantiated, false and defamatory statement predictably made against him by the GSD. Nothing could be further from the truth and the GSD Government's statement is therefore no more than a continuation of the regrettable style of politics that they have us accustomed to which is now the typical style of the GSD when it has nothing to say on a particular issue.

Responding to the unprovoked attack on him that emanated from 6 Convent Place, Mr Picardo said:

"The fact of the matter is that Yvette del Agua and David McCutcheon rely on insults and defamations to try to wriggle out of the issues that concern the public in our community. Given their inability to tackle the substance of issues raised, I am more concerned than ever now about the obvious mismanagement at the top of the GHA. Things don't get better for patients because the Government has a go at me. Clearly, it is time for a change in the administration of our country's affairs and the management of the GHA and the sooner the GSD Government recognises that, the better."