

Hon. Dwayne Seymour JP, MP

Minister of Health, Environment, Culture and Housing

Ladies and Gentlemen, as Minister of Health, Environment, Culture and Housing, I could not be more delighted to see this venture come to the Cayman Islands.

This year has taught us much.

For instance, although costly and disruptive to people's lives, we thought we could rely on Florida or Texas for tertiary and quaternary services. We never expected that we wouldn't be able to travel there easily or indeed feel fully safe when traveling.

Thanks to the efforts of our Government, we have been very successful in eradicating Covid-19 from our shores and then keeping it out of our communities. But what if it had become established? Like each nation has learned, the availability of hospital beds, particularly intensive care beds is crucial to saving the lives of anyone who become critically ill because of COVID-19.

Aster Cayman Medcity is a huge step forward in resilience for the Cayman Islands in times of trouble. It ensures our people have access to some of the most complex of medical services without leaving home and that we will have more intensive care beds per head of population than even the most advanced healthcare systems in the World. Alongside the institutions we already have, it makes the Cayman Islands health system world class.

However, this is about so much more than just resilience.

It is about becoming a healthcare destination of regional repute – not only in the Caribbean but indeed throughout the Americas. One that attracts healthcare travellers or tourists from across the Caribbean, United States, Canada, Central and South America based on the quality of healthcare delivered here, alongside both its accessibility and affordability.

It is about becoming THE destination for Destination Healthcare.

By having such providers based here, we help attract investment in our Islands and, when our borders are more fully opened,

travellers on our airlines, guests in our hotels, and unprecedented access to the most advanced diagnostics, therapies and latest medical technology. That's something we can be immensely proud of and reassured by.

Each year, our Government spends many millions of dollars on tertiary and quaternary healthcare offshore. Naturally, we want the best for our people and so we invest in their health in locations that also happen to be some of the most expensive in the world. But with the same quality and innovations based right here, at more affordable rates, that's money we can invest in supporting our people in other ways too.

I am pleased for the region too.

The challenge we face in providing access to tertiary and quaternary services is not unique to the Cayman Islands. It affects almost every Caribbean nation. The presence of Aster Cayman Medcity here, alongside our existing institutions, allows to us provide a greater level of quality healthcare at affordable rates to

our fellow Caribbean nations. That's good for them and great for us.

I am also delighted by Aster's enthusiasm and commitment to providing assisted living facilities. We have an ageing population and, like so many other countries, a changing model of family that makes it difficult for many to care for our most senior members of society. That's not made any easier by increasing life expectancy, bringing with it a host of healthcare challenges that need more professional support. I have long believed we have needed better answers to this issue and so I am pleased that this project will take very significant steps towards solutions that address both living and healthcare concurrently. This can only improve the later years for our cherished loved ones, providing opportunities for enhancing quality of life that we just don't currently have access to.

So, it gives me enormous pleasure to welcome Aster DM Healthcare to our Islands and indeed to our family of world class providers. I am sure everybody will join me in wishing them the best

as we all work together in driving forward the Cayman Islands as
THE destination for Destination Healthcare.

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