



BARBADOS

Bridgetown

1:3000000

General data

POPULATION, 2024

282,467

SURFACE KM², 2022

430

PHYSICIANS/1000 INH, 2021

2.88

NURSES/1000 INH, 2021-2022

N/A

Socioeconomic data

COUNTRY INCOME LEVEL, 2022

High

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX RANKING, 2023

69

GDP PER CAPITA (US\$), 2023

23,804.02

HEALTH EXPENDITURE PER CAPITA (US\$), 2021

1,400.44

UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE, 2021

77



WHO FRAMEWORK FOR PALLIATIVE CARE DEVELOPMENT

- (A) EMPOWERMENT OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES
(B) POLICIES
(C) RESEARCH
(D) USE OF ESSENTIAL MEDICINES
(E) EDUCATION AND TRAINING
(F) PROVISION OF PC

LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT

- 1 2 3 4
EMERGING PROGRESSING ESTABLISHED ADVANCED

Barbados

(F) Provision of PC (Specialized Services)

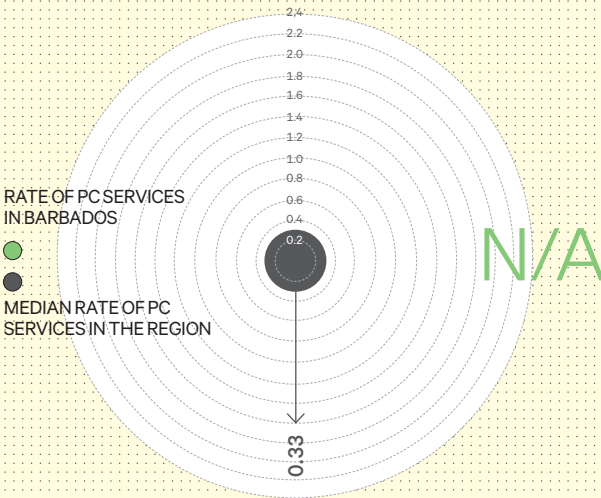
Total number of Specialized PC services

N/A

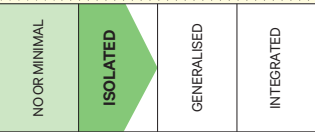
Rate of PC services per 100,000 inhabitants

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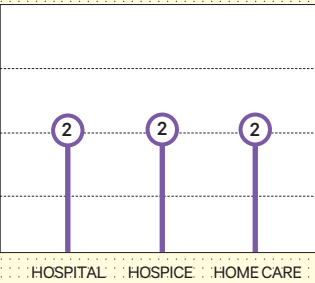
Barbados in the context of the region



Geographic distribution and integration of PC services



Level of development of different types of PC services



Pediatric PC Services

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION AND INTEGRATION



TOTAL NUMBER

0



Barbados

(D) Use of essential medicines

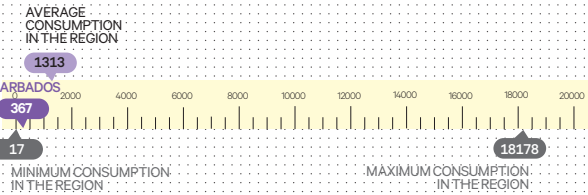


Opioids consumption (excluding methadone)

367

S-DDD/MILL INHABITANTS/DAY

Barbados in the context of the region



Overall availability of essential medicines for pain and PC at the primary level



IN URBAN AREAS %



IN RURAL AREAS %



General availability of immediate-release oral morphine at the primary level

IN URBAN AREAS %



IN RURAL AREAS %



(C) Research

PC-related research articles



Existence of PC congresses or scientific meetings



Consultants: Natalie Greaves, Nekeisha Griffith, Shannon Carington.

National Association: The Barbados Association of Palliative Care (BAPC).

Data collected: November 2024-June 2025

Report validated by consultants: Yes

Endorsed by National PC Association: Yes

Edition: Edited by Atlantes Research Team (University of Navarra, Spain).

(E) Education & Training

Medical schools with mandatory PC teaching



0/1

Nursing schools with mandatory PC teaching



0/1

Recognition of PC specialty



(B) Policies

National PC plan or strategy



Responsible authority for PC in the Ministry of Health



Inclusion of PC in the basic health package at the primary care level



(A) Empowerment of people and communities



Groups promoting the rights of PC patients



Advanced care planning-related policies



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People & Communities

Ind1

Existence of groups dedicated to promoting the rights of patients in need of PC, their care-givers, and disease survivors.



Strong national and sub-national presence of palliative care advocacy and promoting patient rights (as a professional association of Palliative Care, i.e.).

The Barbados Association of Palliative Care (BAPC), registered as a charitable association in 2011, provides free community-based PC across the island. Operating with no paid staff, its team of volunteer doctors, nurses, and social workers delivers care to terminally ill patients referred by hospitals, NGOs, and families. Through its Community PC Program, BAPC supplies medications and essential items (e.g., IV fluids, gloves, incontinence supplies, food hampers), along with psychosocial support and counseling. While full fees are not requested, insured patients are asked to provide a stipend for nurses' transport and incidentals. BAPC serves the entire country and prioritizes in-home PC for patients lacking support. However, growing demand challenges the association's capacity to provide qualified caregivers.

Ind2

Is there a national policy or guideline on advance directives or advance care planning?



There is no national policy or guideline on advance care planning.

There is no national policy, but there is guidance for medical practitioners by the Barbados Medical Council.

Policies

Ind3

3.1. There is a current national PC plan, program, policy, or strategy.



Do not know or does not exist.

Palliative Care is contained within the national strategic plan for NCDs 2020-2025. Within the Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) plan, the Senior Medical Officer of Health and the NCD unit oversee the integration of palliative care elements, yet not as a stand-alone initiative. There is also a Cancer Control plan, which has not been operationalised.

3.2. The national palliative care plan (or program or strategy or legislation) is a standalone.



Not known or does not exist neither standalone nor is included in another national plan.

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Policies

3.3. There are indicators in the national plan to monitor and evaluate progress, with measurable targets.



Not known or does not exist.

Ind4

PC services are included in the list of priority services for Universal Health Coverage at the primary care level in the national health system.



Not at all.

The challenge lies in the availability of primary care services, which are free at the point of access, yet successive governments have not committed to an itemised list of services. Much depends on interpreting the Health Services Act of 1964, particularly section 1a (health.gov.bb/Legislation#HealthServices). Consequently, a list of essential Universal Health Coverage (UHC) services is absent. Health system descriptions do not include a public primary care-based PC service.

Ind5

5.1. Is there a national authority for palliative care within the government or the Ministry of Health?



There is a coordinating entity but has an incomplete structure (lack of scientific or technical section).

There are defined functions and goals to be achieved. Although there is no discrete budget for palliative care, there is a dedicated budget and program staff for NCDs. This includes a senior medical officer of health and technical officers who work closely with the health promotion team.

5.2. The national authority has concrete functions, budget and staff.



There are concrete functions but do not have a budget or staff.

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Research

Ind6

Existence of congresses or scientific meetings at the national level specifically related to PC.



At least one national conference specifically dedicated to palliative care every 3 years.

The Barbados Association of Palliative Care convenes an annual meeting, which is usually accredited by the medical council for continuing medical education points for health professionals. On October 9th, 2024, the Barbados Association of Palliative Care held its annual conference under the theme ‘10 Years and Beyond: Where Do We Go From Here with speakers from Barbados, Cuba/Montserrat and the USA. The conference was open to doctors, medical students, nurses, nursing students, fire officers, police, and the general public.

Ind7

Estimation of the level of peer-reviewed articles focusing on PC research published in any language in the past 5 years with at least one author from the country.



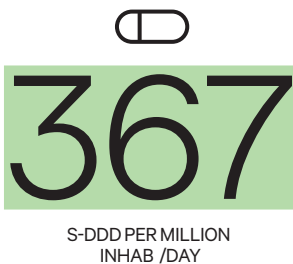
Indicates a minimal or non-existent number of articles published on the subject in that country.

Medicines

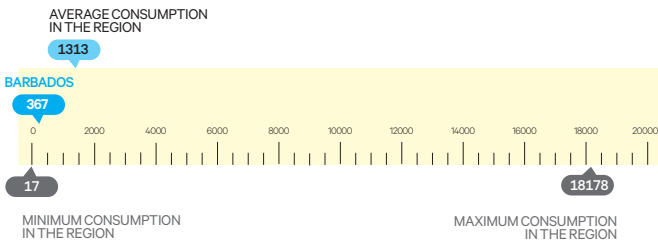
Ind8

Reported annual opioid consumption –excluding methadone– in S-DDD per million inhabitants per day.

Average consumption of opioids, in defined daily doses (S-DDD) for statistical purposes per million inhabitants per day.



COUNTRY VS REGION



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Medicines

Ind9

9.1. Percentage of health facilities at the primary care level in Urban areas that have pain and palliative care medications as defined in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines.



Good: Between 30% to 70%.

9.2. Percentage of health facilities at the primary care level in rural areas that have pain and palliative care medications as defined in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines.



Good: Between 30% to 70%.

Access to essential medicines in Barbados shows little geographic variability, as most rural parishes have public primary care satellite clinics. While major private pharmacies are not located in deep rural areas, the island’s small size allows access to a major pharmacy within 20–30 minutes. The public primary care system ensures essential medicine availability, though access is more limited than in the private sector. Few pharmacies operate beyond 4:30 PM, which impacts access and health system costs. Hospitals and clinics generally stock necessary medications. Opioid medications are available, but morphine solution and IV morphine can occasionally be out of stock. Fentanyl and injectable morphine in the private sector also face periodic shortages. There is no national committee overseeing opioid use; the Barbados National Drug Formulary is the only body managing drug oversight within the Ministry of Health. Despite challenges, major private pharmacies like Massy Stores and iMart Pharmacy are well-distributed and stocked across the island.

Ind10

10.1. Percentage of health facilities at the primary care level in urban areas that have immediate-release oral morphine (liquid or tablet).



Good: Between 30% to 70%.

10.2. Percentage of health facilities at the primary care level in rural areas that have immediate-release oral morphine (liquid or tablet).



Fair: Between 10% to 30%.

The immediate release of medications in both private and public systems is sourced through the public tertiary-level hospital. Medication funding is provided by the Barbados Drug Service. Oral morphine is available in private pharmacies, but there have been occasional difficulties in obtaining immediate-release suspensions in both private and public sectors. Patients have to go to major pharmacies in towns.

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Education & Training

Ind11

- 11.1. The proportion of medical schools with **COMPULSORY** teaching in PC (with or without other optional teaching)
- 11.2. The proportion of medical schools with **OPTIONAL** teaching in PC.
- 11.3. The proportion of nursing schools with **COMPULSORY** teaching in PC (with or without other optional teaching).
- 11.4. The proportion of nursing schools with **OPTIONAL** teaching in PC.

0/1

0/1

0/1

0/1



The University of the West Indies (UWI) at Cave Hill is the main medical school affiliated with Barbados and the wider Caribbean region. While the MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery) program does not include formal instruction in PC, students do receive some exposure to the field. However, there is no PC training for nursing students at Barbados Community College.

Ind12

- Existence of an official specialization process in palliative medicine for physicians, recognised by the competent authority in the country.



There is no process on specialization for palliative care physicians but exists other kind of diplomas with official recognition (i.e., certification of the professional category or of the job position of palliative care physician).

Palliative care is a recognised specialty; however, there is currently no training available on the island. The general conditions to be called a specialist are set in <https://www.barbadosparliament.com/htmlarea/uploaded/File/Act/2010/Medical%20profession%20Act,%202010.pdf>

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Provision of PC / Specialized Services

Ind13

- 13.1. There is a system of Specialized PC services or teams in the country that has a **GEOGRAPHIC** reach and is delivered through different service delivery platforms.
- 13.2. Are available in **HOSPITALS** (public or private), such as hospital PC teams (consultation teams), and PC units (with beds), to name a few examples.
- 13.3. Free-standing **HOSPICES** (including hospices with inpatient beds).
- 13.4. **HOME CARE** teams (Specialized in PC) are available in the community (or at the primary Healthcare level), as independent services or linked with hospitals or hospices.
- 13.5. Total number of Specialized PC services or teams in the country.



Isolated provision: Exists but only in some geographic areas.



Ad hoc/ in some parts of the country.



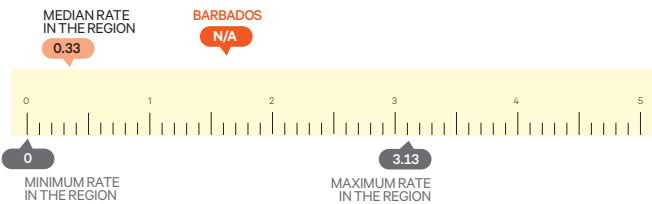
Ad hoc/ in some parts of the country.



Ad hoc/ in some parts of the country.

In Barbados, the greatest need lies in PC, which is primarily provided by internal medicine teams at the island's lone tertiary hospital. There is no dedicated PC team at the hospital, and only one community-based specialist provider exists. Complex pain management requiring intervention is handled by a combination of other specialists, including anesthesiologists and physiatrists. **PC is only offered at home, with patients usually being discharged from oncology to PC once no further treatment is deemed necessary.** At present, there are approximately 10 independent physicians who offer PC for the citizens of Barbados. There are no public hospital-based or clinic-based units facilitated by the government, and PC is predominantly private and reliant on donations. This system highlights the urgent need for a more comprehensive and integrated approach to PC in Barbados.

RATE OF SPECIALIZED PC SERVICES/100,000 INH



N/A

← SPECIALIZED PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICES

Ind14

- 14.1. There is a system of Specialized PC services or teams for **children** in the country that has geographic reach and is delivered through different service delivery platforms.
- 14.2. Number of pediatric Specialized PC services or teams in the country.



No or minimal provision of palliative care specialized services or teams for children exists in country.

0

PPC TEAMS

Primary palliative care providers and the relevant pediatric subspecialist provide most pediatric care. There are no dedicated teams.