

# Belize Initiative Closure Statement

*February 8, 2022*

As many of you may know, Queen's Health Outreach has worked with the Belize community for the past 30 years. We have enjoyed working closely with schools, youth programs, and local organizations to facilitate discussions about needs-based health topics and returning to our friends in the community each year. However, in light of the difficulties imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and longstanding logistical complications with the initiative, it has been decided, after great consideration, to discontinue our Belize Initiative.

During the pandemic, we have witnessed the difficulties of virtual education and the disconnect our organizations have felt. After discussing the future of this initiative, we have felt that the virtual initiative will not be sustainable in Belize. Keeping QHO's founding principle of sustainability in mind, and considering the progressing direction of our operations in our other initiatives, we did not feel that an adequate quality and effectiveness of QHO programming could be established in a virtual format in Belize and meet our long-term goals for sustainability. We have taken a tremendous amount of time to think about the future of the Belize Initiative and have come to the unfortunate conclusion to close the Belize initiative.

QHO strives to critically evaluate the feasibility of each initiative and the sustainable implementation of our actions on an ongoing basis. Through this process, we have found that the Belize initiative has been struggling to maintain a beneficial presence within the communities in which we work due to logistical difficulties prior to COVID-19; a challenge that has only become bigger during the pandemic. It is within our best interest, as well as the partnering organizations in Belize, to apply what we have learned through our critical discussions and close the initiative.

This has not been an easy decision to make. We would like to extend our warmest appreciation to all of our partners in Belize for all their time and energy spent on helping realize the goals of QHO in facilitating health discussions for Belizean students. We are grateful to have been able to work with you and to learn from your insight.

To all Queen's students, faculty, QHO members and alumni, we want to thank you for your support in our efforts to maintain this partnership and in our decision to close this initiative. While this decision has been finalized, we would be happy to hear any comments, questions, or concerns regarding this closure or to discuss further opportunities. Emails can be sent to [codirectors@qho.ca](mailto:codirectors@qho.ca). Thank you again for the support, we will continue to work to improve our sustainability and critically reflect on our initiatives moving forward.

Best,

Isabelle Strang, Emma Schotanus,  
& the 2021-2022 QHO team