

## Laura Tucker-Longworth

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Board Member, Healthy Caribbean Coalition; President, Belize Cancer Society

[Belize](#)

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**Why would you like to be on the NCDA Board of Directors?**



Since 2023, I have been serving as a Board Member for the NCD Alliance. During that period, I worked with dynamic men and women to strengthen, support and advance the mission, vision and goals of the NCDA. Board members contributed their vast knowledge and experience taking into account similarities and differences, culture and ethnicity, geopolitical environments and the socio economic nuances of the global communities who benefit from the work of the NCDA. Board members were also involved in key aspects of finance, governance, and other organizational matters. The NCDA provides leadership, financial support and guidance to select global communities, thereby building their capacities to elevate and accelerate their responses to NCD control. The Caribbean is disproportionately impacted by NCDs. We must increase our support for regional and national organizations to accelerate the implementation of country level strategies. We must work harder to breakdown siloes within the wider society, governments, and health systems that create barriers to NCD initiatives and services. We must increase engagements with our Caribbean communities on NCD Prevention strategies. We must focus on empowering our communities through health literacy. Civil societies must continue to sensitize our citizens on the negative influences of industry on policies necessary to reduce obesity, and address environmental and nutrition factors that place citizens at high risk for NCDs. We must increase lobbying efforts to influence leaders and policy makers to create budgets needed to prevent and control NCDs.

## **What makes you a good candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors?**

I consider myself a good candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors because of my experience working at clinical, policy, and political levels regionally and nationally. Over the past two years, I gained considerable experience serving as an NCDA Board Member and understand key factors related to the economic, social, and commercial determinants of health that impact on the NCD epidemic. During my past position as Speaker of the House of Representative, I worked towards creating a more inclusive, effective and open parliament and established the Belize Parliamentary Front against Hunger and Malnutrition. Over a period of 13 years I served on the Board of Directors of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC). We launched an “end cervical cancer” initiative in Belize in collaboration with the HCC through sponsorship from Direct Aid-Australia. I participated in meetings related to cervical cancer which included the launch of the regional Code of Cancer. I continue to support initiatives related to the prevention and control of cancer. Key successes include the successful launch of the HPV vaccine and establishment of formal arrangements with a neighbouring country for oncology services for Belizean children. We also launched sensitization initiatives to ban sugar sweetened beverages in school, addressed healthy foods for schools and highlighted the childhood obesity crisis. We also sensitized citizens and promoted the adoption of front of package labelling (FOPL). I am well poised to support NCDA activities and fulfil the obligations of an NCDA Board Member.

## **Biography**

I hold a Master's of Science degree in Nursing from the Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing, Loyola University Chicago, (Health Systems Management). I am the Chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee for the Nurses and Midwives Council of Belize. As Chairperson of the National AIDs Commission, I championed an Equal Opportunity Bill to protect the human rights of vulnerable citizens. I also served on the Board for Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS-a regional CARICOM organization. I served on the Board of Directors for the Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC) to address non-communicable diseases and represented the HCC at regional and international meetings. I was the Speaker of the House of Representatives (2017-2020), joining the ranks of only two other women Speakers in Belize. I am also the recipient of several awards for my contribution to health and nursing.

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