

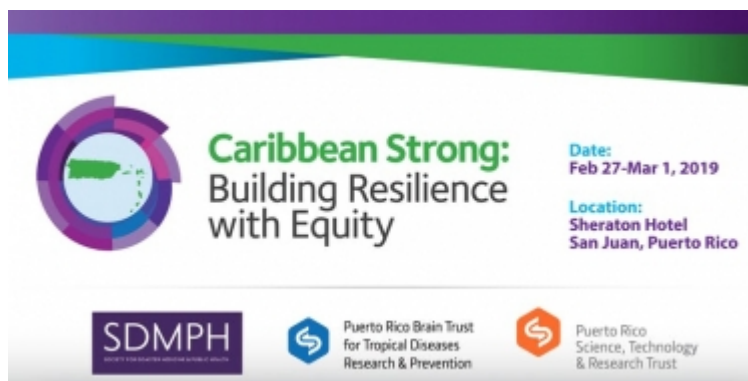
# **First Post Maria Resilience Summit: Caribbean Strong: Building Resilience with Equity** <sup>[1]</sup>

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**Caribbean Strong;** under the slogan of Building Resilience with Equity, is the first post Maria resilience summit to be held at the Sheraton Hotel of the Convention Center from February 27 to March 1, 2019.

The summit will focus on the lessons learned after the two devastating hurricanes that hit Puerto Rico and the Caribbean Region in 2017. It is expected that during the event various entities and leaders of key sectors from within and outside of Puerto Rico share their experiences, lessons learned and evidence-based recommendations to improve resilience in health and public health systems. Likewise, emphasis will be placed on the critical need for collaboration and integration in all sectors to improve and strengthen the health and resilience of Caribbean citizens and communities during this important phase of recovery and reconstruction.

"The Caribbean Region is at a unique moment in history to "Build back better", and this will require a new level of leadership focused on pursuing innovative strategies that are centered on data-based approaches and lessons learned to maximize the opportunities available. ", expressed Lucy Crespo, CEO of PRSTRT. "We decided to organize this summit as part of our role to promote the wellbeing of our citizens through an event in which experts in disaster response and management, emergency medicine, and public health preparedness, bring us their lessons to improve the outcomes when facing a possible future hurricane or disaster."

In Puerto Rico and the Caribbean region, most systems, both private and public, were affected by hurricanes. An integrated review of the resilience of all sectors and their interdependencies is essential to develop evidence-based best practices for the future. That is why, the presentations and keynotes of **Caribbean Strong**, will focus on the topics of medically fragile populations, mental health, infrastructure, hospitals, access to healthcare, food and water, community resilience, institutional resilience, healthcare education and communications, public health, community health response and non-governmental organizations.

**Caribbean Strong** is brought by the Society for Disaster, Medicine and Public Health (SDMPH) whose mission is to advance and promote excellence in education, training and research in disaster medicine and public health based on sound educational principles, scientific evidence and best practices, clinical and public health, for all possible entities of the health system response.

The event will feature Dr. Richard E. Besser as keynote speaker. Besser is the president and chief executive officer of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; the largest private foundation in US dedicated exclusively to the improvement of the health of the nation; which focuses on building a Culture of Health that provides everyone with the opportunity to live the healthiest life possible regardless of their finances, geographic location, race, ethnicity or physical challenges. He will focus on how the culture of health approach can enhance resiliency following disasters.

Likewise, the recommendations and discussions from a local panel comprised of local leaders of the most critical public and private sectors of Puerto Rico including telecommunications, banking, fuel and logistics, food distribution, electric power and water is highly anticipated. All will present the biggest challenges experienced during and post hurricanes Irma and Maria; and will have the opportunity to present their plans to for averting future catastrophe when faced with another hurricane or similar event to hundreds of participants and entrepreneurs.

Many other international speakers will attend the Summit such as: Mr. Rabih Torbay, president and chief operating officer of Project HOPE, Dr. Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association; Satchit Balsari, MD, MPH from the TS Chan Harvard School of Public Health; Dr. Kenira Thompson, president Ponce Research Institute; Lynn R. Goldman, MD, MS, MPH, dean at Milken Institute School of Public Health at the George Washington University and lead author of the George Washington Mortality Study commissioned by the Governor, among others.

The organizing committee of Caribbean Strong also invites Academy members, researchers and other health spokespersons to participate as an opportunity to share their medical work in response to disasters; management, preparation and public health post hurricanes Irma and Maria to present their findings as a summary of a poster or oral presentation. In addition, they invite the general public and entrepreneurs to learn from other evidence-based approaches, experiences and results to build consensus on strategies and obtain recommendations to improve public health preparedness in the region; and create alliances and partnerships to improve readiness.

And for students interested in a financial help for registration to attend or present findings during the event, Heart to Heart International will be sponsoring these opportunities and the Summit Planning Committee will be evaluating applications. Interested parties can send an email to [caribbeanstrong@prsciencetrust.org](mailto:caribbeanstrong@prsciencetrust.org) [2] Other sponsors of the Summit are OXFAM, KOHLER, H2O World Wide, National Network of Public Health Institutes, the Center for Collaborative Research in Disparities and Water Mission. If you are interested in supporting this summit, please visit Caribbean Strong for more information <http://prsciencetrust.org/caribbeanstrong/> [3]

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