

16 June 2015

To Minister of Health and Social Welfare Dr. Walter Gwenigale

Congratulations on your retirement from the Liberia Ministry of Health! Jimmy and I and our Carter Center colleagues salute you for your decades of exemplary service to your country. We have seen firsthand your personal dedication by your hard work to rebuild -- and in fact, improve -- Liberia's health care system after the devastating civil war.

During your distinguished tenure as one of the longest-serving cabinet members under President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, you have not only recreated a national health system. Under your leadership national health priorities with funding mechanisms were established and health training schools were reopened. You lobbied for health care legislation, created health commissions, and founded associations. Most notably, you have become a mental health champion!

It has been our great pleasure to partner with you to improve mental health care in Liberia. Your vision and determination have been instrumental in increasing access to care for those living with mental illnesses. You will always be remembered for many "firsts" in Liberia's health care history. Thanks to you, the first mental health unit at the Ministry of Health was established, the first postwar speech on mental health was delivered to Liberia's legislature, the first mental health policy and strategic plan were drafted, and the first mental health law now awaits introduction by the president.

As you celebrate this milestone, you can take great pride in your accomplishments. We applaud your contributions and stewardship and extend our warm best wishes for an exciting and fulfilling future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rosalynn Carter". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Dr. Walter T. Gwenigale
Johnson Compound, Congo Town
Monrovia, Liberia