



SOUTHERN REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

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PRESS RELEASE

May 19, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Only 8.4 Percent of Pregnant Women Seek Care in Third Trimester; Health Minister Commits to Re-Emphasizing Support

In 2015 and 2016, only 8.4 percent of pregnant women accessed the public health system for prenatal care during the third trimester of their pregnancy, which Health Minister Dr. Christopher Tufton said is a major challenge. The Minister says his ministry will be refocusing and re-emphasizing support to not only expectant mothers, but parents.

Minister Tufton explained that there are clear and increasing signs of expectant mothers taking unnecessary risks, noting that "in 2015, 41 percent of expectant mothers visited the public health facility during the first trimester of pregnancy, while 43 percent visited in 2016. In 2015, 50 percent visited during the second trimester of pregnancy."

The Health Minister was speaking at the launch of a 'Best for Mommy and Baby' Initiative, which is a collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Fontana Pharmacy, implemented by the Southern Regional Health Authority on Thursday, May 18 at the Mandeville Regional Hospital (MRH). The initiative, which is being piloted at the MRH will supply each new mother with a gift basket with a user friendly booklet with antenatal and postnatal care information, and will move to other parts of the island after its pilot.

"In Jamaica we have made some strides but we are still challenged. Over the last two years (2015/16), we have improved in terms of still births; three percent in 2015 and 15 percent in 2016, which may have been attributed to the Advisory on Zik-V and some women taking absolute precaution and not conceiving during that period of time. So, while we have seen some statistics that cause us to be encouraged, the reality is we still have major challenges" Minister Tufton said.

Turning to the importance of the information in the 'Best for Mommy and Baby' booklet, Dr. Tufton pointed out that: "I believe that every mother wants the best for their child but not every mother or expectant mother

(more)

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follows through but the desire is there. So from a policy perspective, it was our responsibility to make it as easy and as simple as possible, and this is the vision which is being manifested through this publication."

Additionally, the Health Minister said the Ministry will continue to explore public-private partnerships to implement other initiatives geared towards empowering expectant mothers and parents to provide the best care possible for themselves and their children. He added that the Ministry will also be launching another initiative which will motivate expectant mothers to utilize the health centres more. This, he said will be done by providing expectant mothers with information and tangible items, which will help parents to better prepare for the birth of their baby.

Meanwhile, Dr. Tufton said much effort should be placed in getting persons to read and appreciate the information being shared, which should enhance the policy the Ministry is pursuing to reduce the risk to mother and child.

"A big part of going forward is to mobilize those who are responsible for distributing and those in the public health system to go through some of the important issues and to encourage those who will benefit from the content to actually spend some time and read the content. Another excellent idea is placing videos in the waiting areas of the health facilities with the content to enhance its absorption. Once we can do that, I think we will do well down the road" Minister Tufton added.

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Picture 1



'Best for Mommy and Baby': Minister of Health, Dr. Christopher Tufton describes the booklet has having all the information in one place.

(more)

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Picture 2



Initiative to Empower New Mothers: Minister Tuffton presents a booklet and gift basket to new mom, Kimoy Barrett while baby Kerown Rowe sleeps.

(more)

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Picture 3



One Stop Shop Information: Conceptualizer of the 'Best for Mommy and Baby' Initiative, Kevin O'Brien Chang who is also the Managing Director of Fontana Pharmacy shares a booklet with new mom, Chancine Denton while hidden is baby Amir Smith. Minister Tufton shares the moment.

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