



## PRESS RELEASE

July 9, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

### Public Health Team Urges Residents to be Vigilant as it Increases Monitoring and Education

Following severe damage in the southern parishes by Hurricane Beryl, the public health team from the Southern Regional Health Authority, is urging the public to be vigilant as it increases its monitoring and health education.

Regional Director for the SRHA, Michael Bent noted that the team has increased its presence in the parishes of Clarendon, Manchester and St. Elizabeth, which suffered severe damage.

He noted that the health team, including public health inspectors, health education officers, community health aides, vector control officers and other support team members have been engaged in a series of environmental health interventions to ensure that the public remains safe and to mitigate against any negative outcome.

“Some of these measures include: food safety monitoring of high-risk establishments in town centres, emergency shelters inspection and reporting, water quality monitoring and sampling, vector control monitoring to include larvicidal and adulticidal treatment, monitoring of nursing homes, funeral homes/mortuaries, monitoring of hazardous work sites, monitoring of ports of entry, health education and sensitization, risk assessment and upcoming community interventions” Mr. Bent explained.

“The Southern Regional Health Authority is encouraging all residents to be vigilant and alert in safeguarding their health and report any practice or activity that would compromise the health of the public to the nearest Health Department, the Southern Regional Health Authority or the Ministry of Health and Wellness” Mr. Bent continued.

In the meantime, Regional Health Environmental Officer, Mrs. Carleen Hennie noted that it is important that residents take food safety seriously during this period.

(more)

**Chairman: Wayne Chen; Vice Chairman:** Michael Stern, **Board Members:** Lorraine Green Mason, Marcus Greenwood, Stafford Houghton, Winston Maragh, Dr. Lloyd Reynolds, Albert Williams, Omar Miller, Dave Powell, **Permanent Secretary's Nominee:** Dr. Naydene Williams, **Regional Director and Secretary:** Michael Bent; **Regional Technical Director:** Dr. Vitillius Holder; **CEO, Mandeville Regional Hospital:** Alwyn Miller; **SMO, Mandeville Regional Hospital:** Dr. Everton McIntosh

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She pointed out that some important tips are:

1. Purchase meats and seafood from certified outlets in a frozen state, not thawed, discoloured or with foul or unusual odours.
2. Vegetables and ground provisions should have fresh, firm appearance, free from odours, chemicals, discolourations, and signs of being water soaked.
3. Canned foods should be labelled, not bloated, dented or rusted.
4. Inspect items in glass bottles for any visible cracks or damage.
5. Always purchase fresh meat from a license butcher. Verify that the meat has a stamp on it.
6. Only use treated water for food preparation and handwashing.
7. Only purchase food from licensed food handling establishments that have met minimum Public Health Standard (depicted by a pink certificate posted inside the food establishment).
8. When grocery shopping, keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and any drainage from these items away from other foods.

(more)

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Vector Control Worker from the Manchester Health Department, Deidre Slowly doing larvicidal dips to determine if mosquitoes were breeding in the water. The public health team was in the Alligator Pond community in South Manchester which was badly damaged by Hurricane Beryl.

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