



PRESS RELEASE

October 13, 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

885 Healthcare Workers Honoured for Selfless Service During and After Hurricane Melissa

Some 885 healthcare workers, primarily from St. Elizabeth, were recognised for their selfless service, dedication and resilience during and after the passage of Hurricane Melissa, at a Grand Awards Gala hosted by the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) on Thursday, October 8, 2026.

The event, held under the theme “Celebrating Our Healthcare Heroes: Resilient Through the Storm”, at Lovers Leap in St. Elizabeth, honoured healthcare professionals who continued providing essential health services despite suffering personal losses and facing dangerous conditions in the aftermath of the hurricane.

Regional Director of the SRHA, Mr. Michael Bent explained that the awards ceremony was organised to formally recognise the extraordinary sacrifices made by healthcare workers who continued serving under difficult and, in some instances, life-threatening conditions.

“Your work is heroic. We believed that with your sacrifice and heroic works, we could do no less than to ensure that we take you away from the hustle and bustle, even while others are at work now because of the nature of the service. Every member of staff in the parish will receive something from the Regional Health Authority as a token of appreciation for your work” Mr. Bent added.

Speaking at the ceremony, Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, commended the workers for placing the needs of their patients and communities above their own, even as they grappled with the devastation caused by the hurricane.

“The difference between you and the crisis is that you have to pick up your marble and go to work even though you are victims too. That takes more than just dedication. It takes a level of commitment that many
(more)

Chairman: Michael Stern; **Vice Chairman:** Simone Scarlett; **Board Members:** Wayne Chen, Lorraine Green Mason, Marcus Greenwood, Winston Maragh, Dr. Lloyd Reynolds, Omar Miller, Denise Edwards, Sherill Morgan, **Permanent Secretary’s Nominee:** Howard Lynch, **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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people don't have and don't understand...of what the healthcare worker has to do" the Health Minister said.

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Reflecting on his visit to Black River immediately following the hurricane, Dr. Tufton recalled the extensive destruction throughout the town, including at Black River Hospital, where healthcare workers continued attending to patients despite the damage to the facility and their own homes.

He noted that some employees remained on duty for days without knowing the full extent of the damage to their properties.

"You had to function while you were trying to recover yourselves. That is called strength, that's called resilience and that is what heroism is all about" Dr. Tufton added.

Special recognition was also given to other staff members who had assisted the team in St. Elizabeth, particularly a team who spent 48 hours in Holland Bamboo in the parish, trying to clear the route to help staff and patients.

(more)

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Healthcare workers gathered at Lovers Leap, St. Elizabeth, for the SRHA Grand Awards Gala in recognition of their heroic service during Hurricane Melissa.

(more)

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Member of Parliament for North Western St. Elizabeth, Mr. Andrew Morris (right), presents an award to Mr. Oneil Salmon, Head Cook at the Black River Hospital, in recognition of his outstanding commitment and selfless service during Hurricane Melissa.

(more)

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Regional Director of the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA), Mr. Michael Bent (right), presents an award to Ms. Gretchen Brooks, Health Records Technician at the Junction Health Centre, in recognition of her dedication and outstanding service during Hurricane Melissa.

(more)

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Picture 4



Southern Regional Health Authority Board Member, Mr. Winston Maragh (left), presents an award to Mr. Cavell Robinson, Hospital Attendant at the Black River Hospital, in recognition of his commitment and invaluable service during Hurricane Melissa.

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Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (left), presents an award to Mrs. Diana Brown-Miller, Chief Executive Officer of the Black River Hospital, in recognition of her outstanding leadership, dedication and selfless service during Hurricane Melissa.

(30)

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