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Treat Mental Illness As Physical Illness-Health Administrator

Regional Director of the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) Mr. Michael Bent is encouraging Jamaicans to treat mental health illnesses with the same regard and seriousness as physical illnesses.

The Regional Director made the call on World Mental Health Day, celebrated on October 10, as he addressed a Mental Health Forum at the Ridgemount United Church Hall in Manchester.

"So often we have persons seeing mental health illness as something I should disassociate myself from. I have looked at situations where I have seen persons in families and workplaces show a different level of care and support to those with mental health illnesses as opposed to those with physical illnesses. I am going to urge persons to treat mental health illness with the same importance as physical illness" Mr. Bent said.

"It is important that we seek to find an environment in the workplaces where we can promote good mental health. I am challenging all persons to identify with one of the objectives of this Forum, which is aiming to spread the understanding of employment practices that support good mental health" Mr. Bent continued.

Mr. Bent reasoned that if persons in society, including family members and colleagues take a different approach to persons suffering from mental health issues, sometimes the result and severity of the illness can be different. He challenged the audience to take a keener interest in mental health, not only during its commemoration in October, but throughout the year.

Acting Parish Manager for the Manchester Health Services, Mrs. Sandia Chambers Ferguson noted that the lack of support for persons with mental health disorders, coupled with the fear of stigma, prevent many persons from accessing treatment to live healthy and productive lives.

She added that she believes that there is an urgent need to not only restore but maintain dignity in mental health. This, she added requires a multi-faceted approach, which will only be achieved by: increasing awareness, empowering employees to manage persons with mental health challenges, strengthening the capacity of the country's mental health teams to manage persons diagnosed with mental health illnesses and empowering mental health staff to manage their own personal challenges that impact their health.



Mr. Michael Bent urges the audience to treat mental illness with the same regard and importance as physical illness.

The Forum, which targeted employers and employees, provided information on relaxation techniques, making the workplace therapeutic, creating a mentally healthy work environment and physical therapy for persons with psychosocial disabilities.



A section of the audience.

In The News: Southern Regional Health Authority

Contract Signed for Roof Repairs Project at May Pen Hospital



Minister of Health, Dr. Christopher Tufton (2nd right) signs the contract for roof repairs to the May Pen Hospital valued at \$54.7 million while Minister of Transport and Mining and Member of Parliament for Central Clarendon, Hon. Lester 'Mike' Henry (2nd left) gets ready to affix his signature. Photographed also are Managing Director of Build-Rite Construction Co. Ltd. Mr. Owen Campbell (left) and CEO of the National Health Fund Mr. Everton Anderson.

Minister of Health Dr. Christopher Tufton recently signed the contract to effect repairs to the roof of the May Pen Hospital in Clarendon, valued at \$54.7 million.

Speaking at the signing ceremony on Thursday, October 12 at the May Pen Hospital, Dr. Tufton explained that the National Health Fund (NHF)-financed roof project, which is expected to be completed within six months, will benefit the Operating Theatre, Outpatient Department, Laboratory, Physiotherapy Department, Female Medical and Surgical Wards and the Maternity and Paediatric Wards.

"Let us try to complete this contract on time. It would be great if it could be completed in a shorter time. Mr. contractor, we are going to hold you to your usual efficiency as we have to deliver value for money as that is the expectation of the people of Jamaica" Minister Tufton said.

Turning to concerns about the government's procurement process, particularly as it relates to matters of urgency such as the leaks at the May Pen Hospital, Minister Tufton said he appreciates and notes the concerns.

"The leaks are substantial...and therefore the capacity of the hospital to respond and to treat with the cases that are necessary requires urgent attention. I strongly support the call for a review of that process so that while ensuring the accountability issues, we can respond as quickly or even more quickly to the demands that are there" Minister Tufton added.

The Health Minister used the opportunity to commend the staff for responding to the concerns and the needs of customers, despite challenging situations.

Meanwhile, CEO of the NHF, Mr. Everton Anderson noted that over the years, the NHF has enjoyed a fruitful partnership with the Southern Regional Health Authority, adding that the team has been very efficient throughout this partnership.

Mr. Anderson pointed out that the NHF has spent some \$14 billion on health projects across Jamaica since its inception in 2004 to September 2017. He added that the Health Fund is committed to partnerships in health, in an effort to support improved healthcare.

In The News: Southern Regional Health Authority

St. Elizabeth Workforce Assisted With Handling Mental Health Issues

A section of the audience listens intently to presentations on effectively dealing with mental health disorders in the workplace. The St. Elizabeth Health Department hosted a Symposium at the St. Matthews Anglican Church Hall in Santa Cruz, St. Elizabeth on October 11.

The symposium also shared with members of the public and private workforce strategies to minimize or prevent the devastating effect of mental health issues in the workplace and the importance of early intervention in managing mental health issues.



This willing participant demonstrates proper breathing techniques under the instructions of Mental Health Nurse Practitioner at the St. Elizabeth Health Department, Karen Elliott (left), who delivered a presentation on stress management in the workplace.

Nurse Elliott, who was addressing a Symposium at the St. Matthews Anglican Church Hall in Santa Cruz, St. Elizabeth on October 11, shared with the audience of private and public sector workers the need for early intervention and the utilization of professional services when necessary and how to effectively deal with mental health disorders in the workplace.



Fitness Instructor, Rowena Barham (left) shares with the audience the importance of physical activity and exercise techniques that can be utilized in the workplace. The St. Elizabeth Health Department hosted a Symposium at the St. Matthews Anglican Church Hall in Santa Cruz, St. Elizabeth on October 11.

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In The News: Southern Regional Health Authority

Increased Eye Care Awareness for Mandeville Residents



Nurse Sharlene Smith-Green of the Mandeville Regional Hospital Ophthalmology Unit gets ready to administer an intraocular eye examination which checks the pressure in the eyes on a client at the commemoration of World Sight Day on Thursday, October 12 at the Cecil Charlton Hall in Manchester.

Scores of residents accessed free eye care services including vision check, eye pressure check and blood glucose measurements and blood pressure tests and also attended the public forum which focused on eye related diseases including glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy and also eye trauma and eye care.



Medical representative at pharmaceutical company, Pfizer, Asha Mohansingh displays brochures from her booth display on glaucoma and eye care at the commemoration of World Sight Day on Thursday, October 12 at the Cecil Charlton Hall in Manchester.

The Mandeville Regional Hospital Ophthalmology Department in collaboration with the Ophthalmic Society of Jamaica commemorated World Sight Day through a public forum and provision of free eye care services to scores of residents.

In The News: Southern Regional Health Authority

Progress Among Students to Develop Culture of Good Oral Health



Bright smiles and an energetic performance from this New Forest Primary School group as they deliver their piece for the Dub Poetry competition in the Manchester Oral Health Competition.

The Southern Regional Health Authority has been making great strides in instilling a culture of good oral health practices among children in the southern end of the island.

Regional Dental Auxiliaries Coordinator for the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA), Ms. Juliet Powell explained that each year the dental teams in the parishes of Manchester, Clarendon and St. Elizabeth work with several schools at the primary and secondary levels to promote good oral health education among the students; an initiative which is in preparation for oral health competitions in the month of October.

She added that each year at the oral health competitions, the students are evaluated through exciting and anticipated oral quiz, poster, dub poetry and deejay competitions.

Ms. Powell noted that through these competitions, the SRHA dental teams have seen an increased awareness about oral health among students which have translated into good oral health practices within their families. She added that this initiative has also fostered a good relationship between dental staff and schools in the respective parishes.

Meanwhile, Regional Director for the SRHA, Mr. Michael Bent pointed out that with Jamaica's high prevalence of non-communicable diseases or lifestyle diseases, "it is imperative that Jamaicans understand that many of the same risk factors for non-communicable diseases are linked to the development of dental health problems."

He added that while the dental teams across the island must be commended for the various strategies used to educate citizens about the importance of oral health to their general health care and well being, parents have an integral role to play to instill simple yet important practices in their children such as eating healthy, brushing daily and flossing.

"It is important to understand that if proper oral health care is encouraged at an early stage, it is likely that this will be practiced throughout a person's adult life. Research has proven that serious conditions such as diabetes and heart diseases are linked to cavities and gum disease which ultimately have an adverse impact on the health sector" Mr. Bent said.

This year, exciting competitions were held by the Clarendon Health Department dental health team on Thursday October 26 at the St. Gabriel's Anglican Church Hall in Clarendon and at the Cecil Charlton Hall in Manchester on Monday, October 30 by the Manchester Health Department dental health team.



Lovely smiles from students at the Oral Health Competition in Manchester at the Cecil Charlton Hall.

Staff Highlight

Jamaica Moves in the Southern Region

The Ministry of Health's national campaign, 'Jamaica Moves' hosted its road tour in the southern region in October with two successful road tours in Manchester on Thursday, October 5 and on Friday, October 27 in St. Elizabeth.

Please see below photographic highlights of the road tour in Manchester.



Jamaica Moves Road Tour in St. Elizabeth



Staff Highlight

Salute to the Hard Workers of the Bun Committee

In 2011, the Southern Regional Health Authority embarked on a 'Project Bun & Cheese Sale' to raise funds to strengthen resources for its revolving loan fund which assists staff members in times of financial challenges. Each year the committee members work tirelessly, selling easter buns and cheese to staff, clients, and other persons. After a successful 2017 project, the staff members were treated to an overnight stay at the Sunscape Resort and Spa. The committee members were also awarded for their years of dedication and hard work.

See below photo highlights.





Nasandra Peart Dunbar

Registered Nurse/Midwife
Percy Junor Hospital

“Professional at all Times”



Guided by the profound words of Martin Luther King Jr, “If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward,” Nasandra Peart Dunbar has been making a significant contribution to public health-care, while enjoying herself along the way.

A registered nurse/midwife at the Percy Junor Hospital in north east Manchester for eight years, Nurse Dunbar describes her experience as phenomenal, adding that “it has been a road that has been very busy, fun and creative as I have represented the hospital at cadet camp, exercise programmes, competitions, health fairs and health presentations.”

Nurse Dunbar explains that some of her duties as a registered nurse/midwife include: identifying the needs of clients and planning, organizing and delivering the principles of the nursing process to deliver quality care, preparing ward assignments, providing quality care to mother and child, delivering antenatal, intra-natal and postnatal care and supervising students and subordinates, among other responsibilities.

Nurse Dunbar considers her achievement of becoming a nurse, her biggest accomplishment so far and aims to become a ward sister by age 33, which she hopes to achieve with God's help. Her focus and passion to deliver quality health-care has not gone unnoticed as her supervisors have consistently noted that she performs her duties consistently well, maintains good interpersonal relationships with both internal and external customers, is always neatly attired, is professional at all times, displays a caring attitude and is reliable and flexible. These exceptional qualities have given her the opportunity to as Ward/Nurse Manager on several occasions.

Describing herself as ambitious, creative, humble and self driven, Nasandra notes that the most important lesson she has learnt is “keeping away from small people who try to belittle your ambitions because great people will always encourage you and make you feel that you can accomplish greatness also. Your true friends will always be happy for you no matter what.”

As the coordinator of the Percy Junor Hospital exercise and dance group from 2015 to present, Nasandra is advising her colleagues to be thankful for their blessings, while never doubting their struggles. “Sometimes things happen to us that we think is unfair or we just don't understand; however, life is about ceasing the moment and making the best of it. Words can only hurt you if you allow it to. Look beyond the negativity because our faith in God is much bigger than our fear. You will survive” she advises.

Skilled in art and craft particularly drawing and performing arts (dance and drama), Nurse Dunbar states that on a weekend she can be found watching movies or playing with her children. She admits to *The Pulse* that her children are her biggest motivation as they inspire her to do her best at all times.

Her favourite singers are Celine Dion and the late Whitney Houston.

Wellness Bytes:

“Health Tips for Christmas”

Credit:
Jamaica Observer



This time of joy and reuniting of family and friends usually comes hand in hand with over-eating. So, instead of throwing caution to the wind for the month of December and starting from scratch in January, here are eight ways you can cut down the calories and stay healthy during the Christmas season while preparing for the new year!

1. Don't miss breakfast

A balanced breakfast cuts down wanting to overeat throughout the day, especially if it's a day of Christmas parties.

2. Drink water

It's easy to be dehydrated and mistake that for hunger. Drink your water throughout the day and have a large glass before your meals. This cuts down on overeating and helps to boost your metabolic rate.

3. Halves

Make sure half of your plate is salad and veggies such as lettuce, tomatoes, carrot, cucumber, and broccoli. Make sure your other half is well proportioned with your Christmas faves. Stay away from rice and take it easy with the red meat.

4. Don't overdo it

Cut down on putting cheese on every single thing. Put your snacks in a container or have a handful so you can keep count instead of finger picking — less is more.

5. Dilute it

If you must have drinks or juices that weren't freshly prepared, dilute them with water.

6. Bread

Swap white bread for its more fibre-rich brother — brown or whole wheat bread. Also, if you usually have two slices of bread, do away with one and eat your food like the pizza you never asked for but are happy you got.

7. Get the extra miles in

Apart from your usual exercise regimen, use the opportunity to walk more while shopping.

8. Join a wellness community

Wellness goals are easier to attain when you have the support of people and friends who want you to be better and are also on that journey with you.

**YOU KNOW YOU ARE DESPERATE
FOR AN ANSWER...**



**WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE
SECOND PAGE OF GOOGLE**

On the
Lighter Side



HR And You:

“DISCIPLINE”

AUTHORITY

i) The authority to impose disciplinary measures is vested in the Governor General acting on the advice of the appropriate Service Commission.

ii) The procedures to be followed are in accordance with the Public Service Regulations.

ADMINISTRATION

The Governor General may delegate any or all of the functions under the Public Service Regulations to Permanent Secretaries or to such other authority or Public Officer as may be specified.

BREACH OF DISCIPLINE

A breach of discipline or an infraction may be deemed to have occurred if an employee violates any of the behaviour expectations established in the code of conduct (Chapter 4).

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

i) Where an infraction is deemed to have occurred and it is felt that disciplinary measures may be necessary, a procedure must be established and communicated to all relevant parties.

ii) Any such procedure must ensure that the right of all parties is protected and nothing is done that might prejudice the outcome.

iii) No arbitrary judgement shall be made about the likely outcome of any proceedings.

iv) Any disciplinary procedure should adhere to the following criteria:

- a) Be consistent with the conditions of employment;
- b) Begin with a thorough investigation;
- c) Follow due process;
- d) Guarantee all parties the right to be heard and the right to representation;
- e) Guarantee the right of appeal;
- f) Be conducted as quickly as possible.

STEPS IN DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

10.5.1 Reporting an Infraction

Anyone reporting an infraction should specify the nature of the infraction, the time, location and any other initial information to facilitate an appropriate reaction/action in a timely manner.

10.5.2 Recording an Infraction

Where an infraction is deemed to be serious enough to warrant formal documentation, care should be exercised to capture all the relevant details from all who may have been involved, including any witnesses.

CONGRATULATIONS

Regional NCD Surveillance Officer of the Southern Regional Health Authority, Nurse Karen Nelson accepts the Sir Kenneth Standard Award for Excellence in Community Health Service from the University of the West Indies.

