

MAY 2019



## The Southern Pulse

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## Health Fair Empowering Pregnant Women in Central Jamaica

Scores of pregnant women and their partners, gathered recently for the fifth staging of PREGMATE, Pregnant Mothers Advancing Through Education, an antenatal health fair staged by the Manchester Chapter of the Jamaica Midwives Association. This is the only initiative of its kind in Jamaica.

Organizer of PREGMATE and Registered Midwife at the Manchester Health Department (MHD), Petal McNally explained that the initiative was developed out of the need to educate pregnant women, as there was an increase in areas of concern in pregnancy including anemia, dental care and nutrition.



**Expectant mothers participate in an exercise session, to demonstrate the importance of exercise in pregnancy.**

She added that the health fair has been well received over the five years, adding that it is encouraging to see the expectant fathers who come to support their partners and who are eager to learn about various aspects relating to pregnancy.

More than 100 pregnant women and their partners participated in this year's forum held at the Mandeville Comprehensive Clinic on Friday, May 31, which focused on several topics including: exercise in pregnancy, importance of an ultra sound, emotional support during pregnancy, birth registration and naming of a baby, postnatal care and home visits, eye examination during pregnancy and dealing with minor disorders in pregnancy.

Public Health Nurse at the MHD, Chereitha Lalor lauded the efforts of the organizers of PREGMATE, noting that their hard work is empowering their clients. "As we work towards having health for all, what better way than to engage our mothers on how to improve their health by empowering themselves through education. I encourage you to listen carefully to the topics...and practice what you have learnt and also share with others," Nurse Lalor said.

For Shanoy Kelly, her experience at this year's forum was "amazing". She noted that though she participated in the 2017 forum, the topics explored were very informative and taught her many new things.

"The experience will definitely help me to be a better mother as I prepare to take care of my newborn. I learnt many things in 2017 and this year was equally informative and educational" she said.



**Organizers of the antenatal health fair, PREGMATE. Seated is Petal McNally, who conceptualized the initiative.**

## In The News: Southern Regional Health Authority

### Nurses Challenged to Rebrand With Right Attitude

Experienced Senior Human Resource Director at the Ministry of Health and Wellness, Ms. Gail Hudson is urging nurses, the largest group in the public health sector, to rebrand with the right attitude.

Ms. Hudson made the challenge to more than 300 nursing students and nurses in central Jamaica at the third staging of the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) nursing symposium, which was initiated to enhance care delivery skills within the nursing profession.



Nurses and student nurses pay keen attention at the nursing symposium.

Speaking on Tuesday, May 21 at the Golf View Hotel in Manchester, Ms. Hudson told the nursing group that rebranding allows individuals to see themselves as a product, therefore placing more value on self.

“You are your own unique product, be acceptable for your words, actions and attitudes. Create a marketing plan for yourself and become a visionary” Ms. Hudson said.

Describing the nursing profession as a noble one, Ms. Hudson encouraged the nurses to be committed to the profession that they have chosen and remain true to self.

“It is important to do soul searching and ask yourself, am I understanding the ethics of my profession? Do I know what this profession means? Learn from mistakes and keep a positive attitude because without the right attitude you are going nowhere too fast” the human resource director reasoned.

For his part, Regional Director of the SRHA, Michael Bent noted that the SRHA is committed to ensuring that its greatest asset, its staff members are provided with the resources, training and opportunity to be on the cutting edge to provide quality and effective health care.

The symposium, which is a partnership between the SRHA nursing executives and the nursing departments of the Northern Caribbean University and the Knox Community College in Manchester. The symposium focused on the theme, “Awakening Nurses to Maintain a Positive Practice Culture”.



Senior Human Resource Director at the Ministry of Health and Wellness, Ms. Gail Hudson urges nurses to rebrand with the right attitude.



## In The News: Southern Regional Health Authority

### All Public Health Staff in Southern Region to be Trained in Compassionate Care



Staff members at a recent compassionate care training being conducted by Director of Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations at the SRHA, Mrs. Nicolette Thomas Edwards.

The Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) which administrates public healthcare in the parishes of Manchester, Clarendon and St. Elizabeth has embarked on the training of all its staff members in compassionate care, in an effort to improve the quality of public healthcare.

The training, which began in June 2018, will train some three thousand employees from all categories of the work force. Over one thousand employees have been trained so far.

The training is aligned to the Ministry of Health and Wellness' thrust to improve the quality of service and the standard of care in public hospitals and health centres across the island, through its compassionate care programme, which was introduced in 2018. The programme was first

launched in the southern region at the Black River Hospital in St. Elizabeth on September 20, 2018.

According to Director of Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations at the SRHA, Mrs. Nicolette Thomas Edwards, staff members are trained in areas of positive leadership, customer service, responsible stewardship, cultural change, accountability, patient focus, effective and efficient use of resources in addition to raising the standard of service. She explained that the SRHA is anticipating several outcomes including: patient compliance, patient satisfaction, a positive patient experience, improvement in waiting time, greater responsiveness to the needs of patients and also confidence from the community and patients in the public health facilities.

"We are also hoping to motivate the staff through these trainings, create less stressful working environments and achieve greater trust among staff and between patients and service providers" Mrs. Thomas Edwards added.

Mrs. Thomas Edwards noted that evaluation of the training has commenced through customer service satisfaction surveys, to evaluate the impact of the training and obtain feedback from customers. The Human Resource Management Director pointed out that as part of the training, staff members are informed and reminded of the available benefits and how they can access assistance through the organization's staff welfare initiatives.

The compassionate care programme comprises three components including training of staff and enhancing basic infrastructure including waiting areas to ensure that patients wait in areas of comfort with pictorial messages of advice and encouragement; refurbished bathrooms, installation of air conditioning and the placement of a television set to display health messages. The third component is volunteerism, which seeks to boost partnerships and engage Jamaicans in offering compassionate care with the supervision of staff.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Southern Regional Health Authority launches its

### Compassionate Care Programme

**WE CARE!**

- C - Compassion
- A - Accountability
- R - Respect
- E - Efficiency

The design representing the CARE philosophy to customers. Pictured at left is the 2018 Top Porter for the Mandeville Regional Hospital, Mr. Leroy Bailey, who is also a member of the SRHA CARE Committee.



## **Dr. Ashok Kotagiri**

**General Surgeon  
Mandeville Regional Hospital**

**“Hardworking and Pleasant– Dr. Ashok”**



As an experienced General Surgeon, Dr. Ashok Kotagiri believes in always doing what is beneficial for the patient, “not what is easy or better for ourself”.

Dr. Kotagiri first began offering outstanding public health care at the St. Ann’s Bay Hospital in St. Ann in 2006, but was transferred to the Mandeville Regional Hospital (MRH) in Manchester in 2008, where he is described as the hardworking and pleasant doctor, willing to perform any task assigned, and without hesitation.

Dr. Kotagiri explains that as a General Surgeon, some of his responsibilities include: providing before and after care for patients who need elective and emergency surgeries in addition to performing difficult surgeries and also supervising and teaching interns and junior residents.

This general surgeon, who has a passion for laparoscopic surgeries, which are minimal invasive surgeries, notes that it is difficult to imagine health care without laparoscopic surgeries going forward. In fact, Dr. Ashok tells the Southern Pulse that two of his biggest professional achievements include: hosting a laparoscopic cholecystectomy marathon in December 2017 where the team performed six laparoscopic cholecystectomies in one day using only one laparoscopic tower, in addition to launching the annual regional minimally invasive surgery symposium in April 2018.

Describing his experience working with the Southern Regional Health Authority as good, Dr. Ashok notes that he is inspired to do his best by the fact that “we are able to get patients better”. A 2018 Medical Officer of the Year awardee at the MRH, Dr. Ashok states that “though we do our best, the outcome is not always what you want.”

Portrayed as an approachable, friendly, trustworthy, reliable and willing individual, Dr. Ashok’s desire for Jamaica is advanced and high quality health care for all. An Indian, who has embraced the Jamaican culture, Dr. Ashok notes that it is heart-warming to see how Jamaicans are receptive to persons of other nationalities.

Dr. Ashok is married with two children and on the weekend he can be found cooking some mouth-watering Indian food. He also loves cricket, but notes that he doesn't play the sport anymore.



# Wellness Bytes

"Physical Activity"

Credit:  
Ministry of Health



# Health & Wellness

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

**ADULTS**

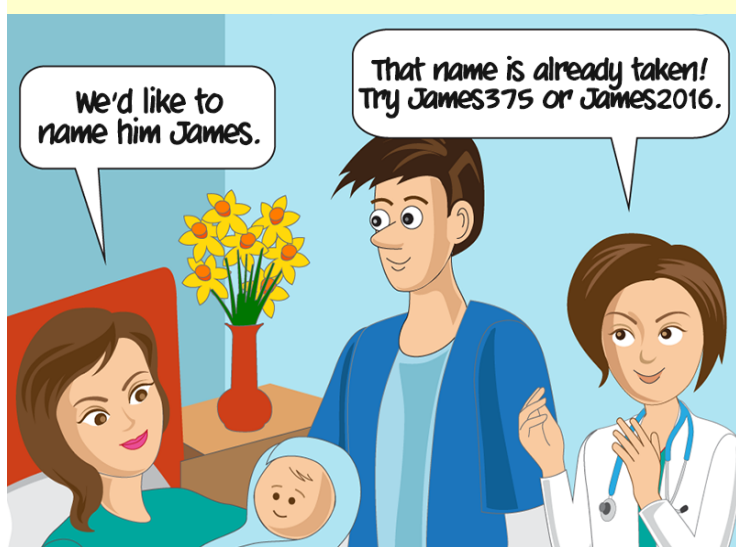
**At least ½ an hour**  
at moderate or vigorous pace at least  
5 days per week to **gain some health benefits.**

**At least 1 hour**  
at moderate or vigorous pace at least  
5 days per week if you want to **lose weight.**

**At least 1 ½ hour**  
at moderate or vigorous pace at least 5 days per week  
if you are obese and want to **lose and maintain weight.**

Ministry of Health

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The Lighter Side



## Disaster Preparedness Tips

"Drought"

Credit:  
Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management



### Types of Drought

Drought is defined as a long period of weather without rain. There are more precise definitions for specific types of drought. The most commonly used are:

- **Agricultural drought:** a period when soil moisture is inadequate to meet the demands for crops to initiate and sustain plant growth. In areas experiencing drought, plant life is severely damaged.
- **Hydrological drought:** period of below average or normal stream-flow and/or depleted reservoir storage. Hydrological drought occurs out of phase with meteorological and agricultural drought because it takes longer for the deficiencies to show up in lakes and streams.
- **Meteorological drought:** a period of well-below average or normal precipitation (rainfall) that spans from a few months to a few years.

There is also a new phenomenon called:

- **Socio-economic drought:** this occurs where the demand for an economic good exceeds the supply because of a weather-related shortfall in the water supply. An example of this phenomenon is the availability of rice, a Caribbean staple.

### Causes of Drought

There are several causes of drought:

- Changing weather patterns manifested through the excessive build up of heat on the earth's surface.
- Meteorological changes that result in a reduction of rainfall.
- Reduced cloud cover that results in greater evaporation rates.
- Inadequate planning.
- Over-grazing and poor cropping methods that result in reduced water-retention capacity of the soil.
- Improper soil conservation techniques that leads to soil degradation.
- Densely populated lands.

### Impacts of Drought

The impacts of drought can be economic, environmental or social:

- Lowering of the water table
- Erosion

- Based on its insidious nature drought response tend to be late and uncoordinated that leads to crisis management rather than risk management
- Rapid depletion of soil water
- Loss of biodiversity
- Over-exploitation such as over-grazing and deforestation can lead to desertification
- Disruption to the normal workings of society in terms of quality of life
- Starvation in some countries, especially in Africa

### Jamaica's Drought Vulnerability

Jamaica is particularly vulnerable to the drought hazard because of the following reasons:

- As a developing country, Jamaica is particularly vulnerable to drought as we rely heavily on agriculture.
- Jamaica lies within the tropics and so we are dependent on more than one rainy season. A deficiency in any one season can produce a damaging drought.
- The increase in Jamaica's population due to urbanization, has led to a great increased demand for an already limited supply of water.
- Limited/poor national water storage systems

## SUBMIT AN ARTICLE

We welcome your input. Please submit your articles and feedback for the June edition to:

Latoya Laylor Brown, Public Relations Officer

Email: [latoya.laylor@srha.gov.jm](mailto:latoya.laylor@srha.gov.jm)

Deadline: July 10, 2019

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# HR And You:

## "LEGAL ADVICE"

### LEGAL ADVICE

4.6.1 The advice of the Attorney General shall be sought where:

- i) in the execution of official duties and responsibilities, a public officer is in doubt of the legal implications of any matter; or
- ii) the interests of the Government may be compromised or jeopardized; or
- iii) there are indications that legal proceedings may need to be instituted against anyone; or
- iv) other legal services are not readily available to the Ministry or Department.

4.6.2 Submissions to the Attorney General should include:

- i) the points on which the advice is required;
- ii) the precise statements of the relevant facts;
- iii) the appropriate cross references to any attachments

### 4.7 LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST PUBLIC OFFICERS

i) The Government, further to the advice of the Attorney General, shall defend public employees against whom proceedings are threatened or brought in respect of acts done or liabilities incurred in the exercise of their duties;

ii) In instances where such proceedings are threatened or brought the facts shall be reported to the Attorney General. Subject to paragraph (v) below, the officer against whom the proceedings have been threatened or brought, shall incur no legal or other expenses. No other action shall be taken in connection with any proceedings until the advice of the Attorney General has been obtained;

iii) Where the Government defends proceedings against a public officer and the Attorney General decides to settle, the cost shall be indicated to the Financial Secretary and also the amount if any, which the Government shall contribute towards such a settlement;

iv) Upon receipt of the decision, the Attorney General shall advise the public employee of the amount which he will be asked to contribute towards such settlement. His/her written agreement shall be obtained for the Attorney General to settle the proceedings.

v) If the public employee does not agree to contribute the amount decided upon, the Government may refuse to continue to afford legal assistance to him/her.

### 4.8 LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT CAUSED BY THE ACTIONS OF PUBLIC OFFICERS

Where as a result of the act of a Public Officer, legal proceedings are successfully brought against the Government or another public officer and the Government deems it desirable to settle such proceedings out of court, disciplinary action may be instituted against the employee.

In such an instance, the public officer shall have the right to own counsel. The public officer may be required to bear some of the costs of a successful action against the Government or another public officer.

### 4.9 LEGAL PROCEEDINGS BY PUBLIC OFFICERS

Officers may not institute civil proceedings in any Court in connection with matters arising out of the performance/discharge of their public duties or against a Minister or any other public officer for anything done in the performance of his/her duties, without the permission of the appropriate Service Commissions.