

MARCH 2020



## The Southern Pulse

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## Improved Mental Health and Psychological Support for Healthcare Workers in Central Jamaica

The Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) has rolled out improved mental health and psychological support services for its healthcare staff members in the parishes of Manchester, Clarendon and St. Elizabeth during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) crisis.

These services include counselling and welfare support for staff members who are given support from social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists and the mental health team. Members of staff can access services 24 hours daily.

Regional Director for the SRHA, Michael Bent noted that COVID-19 has caused a high level of concern and anxiety among the general population, including healthcare workers because of the nature of their jobs.

“Through the SRHA Employee Assistance Programme, which has been implemented for a few years now, staff members had access to counselling support, however, because of this crisis, we saw the need to improve those services and have made preparations to support the social, mental and psychological needs of our staff members” Mr. Bent said.

The Regional Director pointed out that the Regional Health Authority has been focusing on keeping its staff members motivated during this period, noting the importance of their wellbeing to be able to provide care for the population during this period.

He added that focus will also be placed on staff members who may need to be quarantined or isolated. These persons will be assigned a designated counsellor, who is required to follow up with the staff member during the period of quarantine or isolation.



**Southern Regional Health Authority**

Compassion | Accountability | Respect | Efficiency

### HUMAN RESOURCE DEPARTMENT

As part of our Employee Assistance Programme(EAP), the HR Department has rolled out a Telephone Network of Professionals to help you with anxiety and challenges that you might be facing as an employee during this time.

Many of us are feeling additional anxiety and stress as the situation with COVID-19 evolves. Starting immediately you and your loved ones will have access to these professionals. Just call or text any of these numbers below to access this service.

#### Some Signs & Symptoms of Anxiety

- \* Nervousness & Restlessness
- \* Rapid heart rate & breathing
- \* Trembling or muscle twitching
- \* Difficulty focusing and thinking clearly
- \* Insomnia



1876-774 - 7654 / 1876-772 - 3822 /

1876-798 - 5492/ 1876-774 - 8540 / 1876-802 - 5548



## In the News: Southern Regional Health Authority

### COVID-19 Preparedness Boosted in Central Jamaica



**Staff being trained in the use of personal protective gear at the May Pen Hospital in Clarendon.**

The Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) is boosting its capacity to respond and manage the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), in the southern end of the island.

The SRHA, which administers public healthcare in the parishes of Manchester, Clarendon and St. Elizabeth, has been training its staff members in the clinical and surveillance management of COVID-19 and the use of personal protective gears.

Regional Director for the SRHA, Michael Bent noted the SRHA has a staff complement of 3,200 workers and has trained more than

2000 workers at the primary and secondary levels, so far.

“The training which began from January 2020, has trained staff members in almost all categories, which would include our doctors, nurses, porters, drivers, lab technicians and even our administrative staff, which we want to be aware as well” Mr. Bent explained.

Mr. Bent is encouraging members of the public to remain calm and practice proper personal hygiene incorporating frequent hand washing with soap and water and coughing and sneezing in a tissue and discarding it in a bin.

He is also encouraging persons who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, which include, cough, fever, runny nose, sore throat and difficulty breathing to get in touch with the Ministry of Health and Wellness before visiting the health centers or hospitals.

The numbers are: 888-ONE-LOVE (663-5683)/ 888-754-7792/ 876-542-5998/ 876-542-6007/ 876-542-6006, while the email addresses are: [covid19@moh.gov.jm](mailto:covid19@moh.gov.jm) and [jacovid19facts@gmail.com](mailto:jacovid19facts@gmail.com).

Jamaicans are also encouraged to utilize factual information from credible sources including the Ministry of Health and Wellness, Jamaica.



## In the News: Southern Regional Health Authority

### Persons Encouraged to Be Responsible in Sharing Information Regarding COVID-19



The Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) is appealing to residents to be responsible in sharing information regarding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The Health Authority which administrates public healthcare in the parishes of Manchester, St. Elizabeth and Clarendon, is making the appeal against the background of several messages being circulated on social media and messaging platforms about persons who are alleged to have COVID-19 in the region.

Regional Director for the SRHA, Michael Bent is reminding persons to be extremely careful in sharing information and to ensure that messages and information are verified before being shared.

“We understand the fear that many people are experiencing, given the seriousness of the disease, however it is important that persons understand that misinformation tends to play on people’s fears and can have devastating results. Be responsible when you share information and messages and try to access factual information from the Ministry of Health and Wellness” Mr. Bent said.

Persons can access information from the Ministry of Health and Wellness and its four Regional Health Authorities, the Southern Regional Health Authority, the North-East Regional Health Authority, the South-East Regional Health Authority and the Western Regional Health Authority.

Persons with COVID-19 concerns are reminded to contact 888-ONE-LOVE (663-5683), 888-754-7792, 876-542-5998, 876-542-6007, 876-542- 6006 and 876-542-5998. Members of the public may also make contact the Ministry via email using [covid19@moh.gov.jm](mailto:covid19@moh.gov.jm) or [jacovid19facts@gmail.com](mailto:jacovid19facts@gmail.com).



# Leroy Bailey

**Male Attendant/Hospital Porter  
Mandeville Regional Hospital**

**“Artistic and Well-Mannered Leroy Bailey”**



“In spite of the bad experiences you may encounter you still have to see the good in it and do your best and do your duty”. This is what Leroy Bailey expressed as he recalled his journey as a Porter at the Mandeville Regional Hospital (MRH). This mindset is what has allowed him to be an efficient Porter, not only serving and assisting his employees but ensuring patients receive the best service.

His journey began with the MRH in 2014 and he endeavours to continue serving to the best of his ability to make the lives of the patients he cares for a better one. Leroy shares that some of his duties include: helping to transport patients to different areas of the hospital or to other hospitals, assisting with certain procedures as well as supporting other health care workers if the need arises.

A member of the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) C.A.R.E Committee, Mr. Bailey shares with the Southern Pulse that “working for the SRHA is a great experience as it enables me to explore, in terms of my job, it does not limit me. It gives you opportunities, different avenues to do different types of duties.” Due to his excellent customer service skills, Mr. Bailey was selected as the employee featured on the Compassionate Care banner.

Mr. Bailey describes himself as a hardworking and driven young man, who despite his limitations will always seek to give his very best. “If I don’t believe in myself, then no one will believe in me, so I always have to push myself in spite of all the challenges and carry myself in a certain way and execute my duty on a daily basis”, he says.

Described by others as well-mannered, humble and caring, it would come as no surprise that Mr. Bailey received the CEO Customer Service Award in 2015 and Porter of the Year in 2018. He, however, does not take all the credit for these admirable character traits, but is grateful to his grandmother who stressed the importance of having good morals, values and principles as a child.

In addition to his professional success, when Mr. Bailey is not assisting to save a life, you can find him impacting a life as he spends his free time engaging in conversations with the young people in his community. He also participates in friendly football matches with the youth and does some farming.

Mr. Bailey reveals that many people are not aware that he is artistic and creative so if he decided to be as dedicated to art as he is with his current profession, he would have been really good at it.

Given the current state of the country in this COVID-19 pandemic, he advises all his colleagues and the citizens of Jamaica to just have love for everyone and be fair to all. “Set a standard, see everyone as human beings, don’t judge someone based on their background, give everyone equal care. Let us all have love for each other and be our brother’s keeper” he encourages.

**Credit: Kelichi Brown, Northern Caribbean University Intern**

# Wellness Bytes

## "Coronavirus"

Credit:  
Ministry of Health  
and Wellness



### What is a coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are known to cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

### What is a novel coronavirus?

A novel coronavirus (CoV) is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans.

### Can humans become infected with a novel coronavirus of animal source?

Detailed investigations found that SARS-CoV was transmitted from civet cats to humans in China in 2002 and MERS-CoV from dromedary camels to humans in Saudi Arabia in 2012. Several known coronaviruses are circulating in animals that have not yet infected humans. As surveillance improves around the world, more coronaviruses are likely to be identified.

### What are the symptoms of someone infected with a coronavirus?

It depends on the virus, but common signs include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath, and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.

### Can coronaviruses be transmitted from person to person?

Yes, some coronaviruses can be transmitted from person to

person, usually after close contact with an infected patient, for example, in a household workplace, or health care centre.

### Is there a vaccine for a novel coronavirus?

When a disease is new, there is no vaccine until one is developed. It can take a number of years for a new vaccine to be developed.

### Is there a treatment for a novel coronavirus?

There is no specific treatment for disease caused by a novel coronavirus. However, many of the symptoms can be treated and therefore treatment based on the patient's clinical condition. Moreover, supportive care for infected persons can be highly effective.

### What can I do to protect myself?

Standard recommendations to reduce exposure to and transmission of a range of illnesses include maintaining basic hand and respiratory hygiene, and safe food practices and avoiding close contact, when possible, with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing.

### Are health workers at risk from a novel coronavirus?

Yes, they can be, as health care workers come into contact with patients more often than the general public WHO recommends that health care workers consistently apply appropriate infection prevention and control measures.



## Disaster Preparedness Tips

"Corona-Virus Preparedness (COVID-19) Tips"

Credit:  
Ministry of Health & Wellness

## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS



Plan



Prepare



Recover



### Wash your hands with soap and water:

- after coughing or sneezing
- when caring for the sick
- before, during and after you prepare food
- before eating
- after toilet use
- when hands are visibly dirty
- after handling animals or animal waste

### PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS FROM GETTING SICK



#ProtectYourselfFromCoronavirus  
#StayCoronavirusFree #KeepHealthy



888-ONE-LOVE(663-5683) | www.moh.gov.jm



## WHAT TO DO

IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE BEEN EXPOSED OR ARE EXPERIENCING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS



CALL 888 ONE LOVE (663-5683)

**IMMEDIATELY!**

- Stay at home.  
(Do not go to work, school or any public place)
- Do not use public transport.
- Avoid visitors to your home.

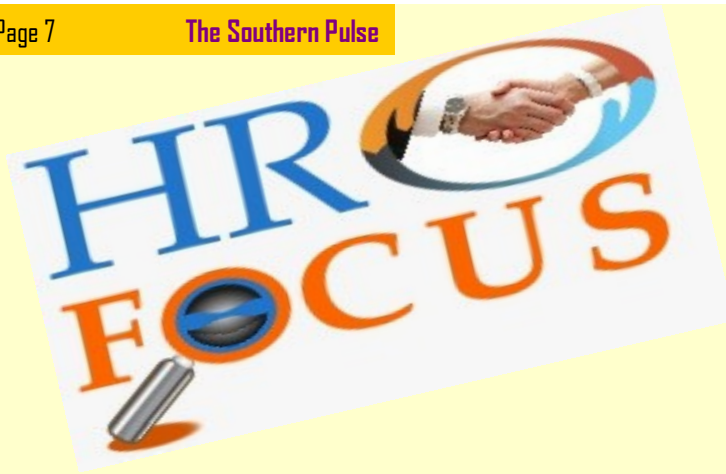
*You may need to do this for up to 14 days to reduce the spread of the infection.*

## Jamaicans be like



The Lighter Side





The Ministry of Health and Wellness is encouraging Jamaicans who may be experiencing anxiety or stress out of concern over the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) to contact its mental health line at 888 NEW LIFE (888-639-5433).

“Anxiety and stress are normal responses to a public health challenge of this magnitude. Among other things, COVID-19 has required that people self-quarantine or otherwise physically distance themselves from others. This can be stressful for anyone and in some people can lead to feelings of isolation,” said Director of Mental Health and Substance Abuse at the Ministry of Health and Wellness, Dr Kevin Goulbourne.

“We urge Jamaicans to talk about their fears and anxiety. It is amazing how therapeutic it can be to share your feelings and with someone who takes the time to listen. The mental health team at the Ministry is here to listen and to support our Jamaicans through this public health challenge. We therefore welcome those calls,” he added.

It is now more important than ever that Jamaicans take care of their emotional health and there are a number of ways that they can do that from home.

# HR And You:

## “How to Handle the Coronavirus in the Workplace”

- **Get clear and communicate.** Meet with your HR partners to discuss policies around sick time and family leave, so that you can advise your employees about exactly when they should call in sick to care for themselves or their family members.
- **Create a policy around communicable illness.** While it's important to ensure that employees meet to discuss a mounting outbreak, it's also a sound practice to use the opportunity to be proactive. Consider developing a policy to streamline procedures in case of future communicable illness outbreaks.
- **Refine your corporate culture .** While the spread of Coronavirus is worrisome, it also presents an opportunity to clarify your policies and to assure your employees of leadership's commitment to their wellness. This stands to enhance your culture, making it one where employees feel well-positioned to succeed and to thrive.

**Credit:** Eileen Hoenigman Meyer

## SUBMIT AN ARTICLE

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

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