



## 'E-Care' Goes Live at May Pen Hospital: Electronic Health Records a First for Jamaica



Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton looks keenly at information generated by the Electronic Health Records (EHR) System, which was launched at the May Pen Hospital. The Minister is assisted by Nurse Manager at the hospital, Diana Reid West.

### Inside This Issue

#### In the News:

E-Care Goes Live at May Pen Hospital

Page 2

#### Facilities on the Move:

Regional Office Staff Members Access Free Screening

Page 4

#### Disaster Preparedness Tips:

Road Safety Tips

Page 7

#### Wellness Bytes:

World Cancer Day: February 15, 2024

Page 8

#### HR Focus:

Appointments

Page 9

## In the News: Southern Regional Health Authority

### 'E-Care' Goes Live at May Pen Hospital: Electronic Health Records a First for Jamaica



**Minister Christopher Tufton (centre-standing), Mr. Wayne Chen (left), Councillor Joel Williams (2nd left) and staff members from the May Pen Hospital examine the Electronic Health Records (EHR) System.**

Jamaica's Electronic Health Records (EHR) System is now active at the May Pen Hospital, following a launch ceremony held today (January 11) at the facility.

Dubbed 'E-Care', the system is part of a public health overhaul that modernises service delivery through the implementation of digital health records.

This sees the switch to a paper-less system for patient records with real-time access to medical information. It will allow for the smooth upload and sharing of these records among healthcare professionals by way of electronic devices.

"This linking of health records means that cross-matching and information sharing between health centres and hospitals will

now be possible," said Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton.

The conversion of paper-based records is part of the Ministry's Health Systems Strengthening Programme (HSSP) and is being financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to the tune of US \$5 million dollars in the first phase. Twelve other facilities are set to benefit from the initial rollout.

These are Spanish Town Hospital; St. Ann's Bay Hospital; May Pen West Health Centre; Chapelton Community Hospital; May Pen East Health Centre; Mocho Health Centre; Greater Portmore Health Centre; St. Jago Park Health Centre; Old Harbour Health Centre; St. Ann's Bay Health Centre; Ocho Rios Health Centre; and Brown's Town Health Centre.

Among the results of the implementation will be, "significant savings for the patients as test results become more readily available, and the capture of critical health information data that will assist in the formulation of better evidence-based policymaking and programme design," the Minister continued.

With built-in security measures such as data encryption, health information systems like 'E-Care' offer a greater level of safety and privacy for patient's personal data. "The implementation of this contract comes at a time when there is urgent need for enhanced integration of health systems and is being undertaken on the basis of a strategy focused on governance and capacity building, data management and information technologies, information and knowledge management for health analysis," Dr. Tufton explained.

The move, a first for Jamaica, is expected to further improve wait times, eliminate repeat diagnoses and increase service satisfaction. Through its 'one patient, one record' philosophy, healthcare providers and facilities will have greater opportunity to collaborate in the delivery of care, through, for example, a seamless connection of critical diagnostic imaging that will enable healthcare professionals to see x-rays and CT scans on computers and tablets provided within the facilities.

The introduction of electronic health records comes with the provision of managed network services to support the upscaling of public health ICT infrastructure.

The integrated health system is being implemented by the UK firm, The Phoenix Partnership (TPP), the leading global provider of digital health technology. The Cabinet-approved contract includes a 15-year support period with the addition of a patient-centric mobile health app. at May Pen Hospital Electronic health records a first for Jamaica.

**Credit: The Ministry of Health & Wellness**



# In the News: Southern Regional Health Authority

## Santa Cruz Health Centre Now a ‘SMART’ Health Facility



**Sharing in the opening ceremony are from left: Dr. Marianne Bullock-DuCasse, International PAHO Consultant, Health Emergencies (Caribbean); Mr. Delroy Slowley, Member of Parliament; British High Commissioner to Jamaica Judith Slater Sir Philip Barton, Permanent Under Secretary, UK FDCO; Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, Minister of Health & Wellness; Sean Brissett, Parish Manager, St. Elizabeth Health Services; Ian Stein, PAHO/WHO Country Rep; and Michael Bent, Regional Director, Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA).**

The upgraded and retrofitted Santa Cruz Health Centre in St. Elizabeth was officially handed over to the Ministry of Health and Wellness on Thursday, January 18.

This state-of-the-art centre has been designated a “smart facility”, with the capability to respond effectively to crises while maintaining core functions during disasters and public health threats, exemplifying the ongoing efforts to fortify the country’s health system.

Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, who delivered remarks, said that the smart facility is a clear example of the investment in people and infrastructure, adding that “the collaboration with the United Kingdom and our implementing partner, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), is a win for public health in Jamaica and a step in the right direction”.

“Infrastructural resilience remains critical, even as we face the threat of climate issues, emerging diseases and the continued dangers associated with non-communicable diseases (NCDs),” the Minister continued.

He said that the Santa Cruz Health Centre being upgraded to a smart facility is another feather in the cap for St. Elizabeth, noting that the parish’s 23 health centres have each benefited from upgrade and development over the past five years.

“All the health centres have benefited to the tune of \$450 million in total. The Black River Hospital has also benefited from \$200 million in expenditure,” Dr. Tufton noted, adding that the US\$1.4 million that was spent upgrading the Santa Cruz Health Centre, “means that as a parish, St. Elizabeth would have seen significant development in health infrastructure over the past five years.”

Dr. Tufton pointed out that the work at the Santa Cruz facility encompassed both structural and non-structural improvements, with a focus on promoting sustainability. He explained that on the structural side, notable additions included a new reinforced concrete roof covering the walkway between buildings two and three, as well as a new reinforced concrete walkway and lightweight timber roof connecting all buildings.

Non-structural enhancements involved the installation of hurricane shutters on all windows, the incorporation of two 1,000-gallon potable water storage tanks with a booster pump, and the implementation of various safety measures.

These safety measures include a new fire alarm and public address (PA) system, fire extinguishers, signage and fire hose reels. In his remarks, PAHO/World Health Organization (WHO) Representative for Jamaica, Bermuda and the Cayman Islands, Ian Stein, emphasised the critical nature of designating health facilities as “smart” in developing resilience within the health system.

“Attaining our common objective of transforming the country’s healthcare system and achieving universal health requires strong collaborations and strategic investments to establish a healthcare system capable of effectively navigating challenges and safeguarding the well-being of the population in the face of public health threats,” Mr. Stein said.

Meanwhile, Permanent Under Secretary of the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Sir Philip Barton, expressed his delight with the facility, noting that “the blueprint and toolkit developed for this project provide a helpful platform for risk reduction within the health sector going forward”.

We applaud Jamaica’s efforts so far in securing significant additional funding for upgrading more sites and being the first in the region to embed the new standards in their building codes,” he added.

**Credit: The Ministry of Health & Wellness**



## Facilities on the Move

### Regional Office Staff Members Access 'Know Your Numbers' Campaign

On Tuesday, January 30, the Regional Office hosted a wellness day for staff members, under the 'Know Your Numbers' campaign.

Scores of staff members received tests and checks including blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, Body Mass Index (BMI), mental health screening, dental screening and treatment, health education, nutrition education and sampling, physical assessment and education and HIV self-test kits distribution. Get tested today and know your numbers.

Please see below highlights.





Facilities on the Move

Black River Hospital Receives Donation From We Care Social Outreach Development Limited



We Care Social Outreach Development Limited Founder and Director Kevin Josephs (left) shares a photo opportunity with Nursing Supervisor from the Black River Hospital, Narda Russell.

The Black River Hospital in St. Elizabeth continues to be the beneficiary of several items of donation from the We Care Social Outreach Development Limited, which has been donating to the hospital for several years.

On January 25, the hospital received items including walking sticks, walking frames, adult pampers, adult incontinence pads, sheets, clothing for adult and children, surgical masks, medical accessories, surgical instruments, children toys and bandages.

The hospital team thanked the We Care Social Outreach Development Limited team including Founder and Director Kevin Josephs, Director Devon Kinhead and Secretary Hyacinth Kinhead for their continuous support. Gratitude was also extended to Kingsley Shipping, David Johnson, Melita Cox, Janet Allman and David Murray and other donors.



Facilities on the Move

Balaclava Health Centre Commemorates HIV Awareness Day

On January 26, the Balaclava Health Centre in St. Elizabeth commemorated HIV Awareness Day at the facility in an effort to sensitize people about HIV and reduce the stigma and discrimination surrounding persons living with the illness. The event was an initiative was a part of the Balaclava Adolescent Health Clinic, which helps adolescents to manage their health and development. Please see below highlights.





While there are many factors that contribute to road accidents, adhering to some common road safety tips could make a big difference between life and death. Please see below a few safety tips to bear in mind while using the road.

**Pedestrians:**

- When using the road walk facing oncoming vehicles.
- Wear light-coloured clothing at nights.
- Clearly indicate to motorists your desire to cross the road.
- Walk in single file where there is no sidewalk or where the sidewalk is narrow.

**Pedal Cyclists:**

- Observe traffic lights and stop signs.
- Do not hold on to moving vehicles.
- Ensure you are travelling in the right direction on a one-way street.
- Wear a helmet at all times.

**Children:**

- Parents, ensure your children follow the golden rule before crossing the street.
- First they should look left, then look right and once again look left before and ensure it is safe before they cross the street.
- Young children must always be accompanied by adults.

**Don't Drink and Drive**

When you drink and drive:

- You are less likely to observe traffic signs, bikers, pedestrians or cars coming from the opposite side.
- You are less able to judge distances and speed.
- You have less control over your reactions in traffic situation.
- You will develop a false sense of confidence



# Wellness Bytes

“World Cancer Day: Closing The Care Gap”

Credit:  
Ministry of Health & Wellness



Internationally, World Cancer Day is celebrated on February 4<sup>th</sup> of each year. This is held not to celebrate cancer or to make light of the people living with and affected by Cancer but to create awareness.

**What exactly is Cancer?**

Simply put, it is abnormal growth of cells which can lead to invasions near the site of origin or extend its’ reach throughout the body. Cancer is no respecter of persons or body parts. It affects the young and the old, the rich and the poor. No normal body cell that has the ability to grow or multiply is immune. According to the National Screening Guidelines for Priority Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in Primary Health Care, of all the cancers notified 1:8 are from breast cancer, 1:8 are from prostate cancer and 1:18 are from colorectal cancer. Why mention these three cancer types? The fact is that 30% of cancers have modifiable risk factors and these three types are included to a large extent in that 30%.

**Why should anyone be concerned about or be aware of cancer?**

The concern about cancer and the need to create awareness is necessary, as cancer is one of the top five NCDs creating morbidity and premature mortality in our population worldwide and locally. Though a diagnosis of cancer is not an automatic death sentence, it can be very costly. A series of treatment could take over a million dollars. Should it require combined treatment of both chemotherapy and radiotherapy, could cost nearly two million dollars in treatment. In the Southern Region we only have haematological service available via the Mandeville Regional Hospital Haematology Unit. Therefore, the cost of transportation to and from Cornwall Regional Hospital Chemotherapy and Radiotherapy Unit or Kingston Public Hospital Unit would need to be considered. Particularly for radiotherapy where the fractions are administered daily over a one week period.

**For the Southern Regional Health Authority alone, we are expecting not to be surprised if we discover 1595 new cancer cases and 1030 deaths annually from the condition.** This could be anyone of us or someone we know.

**What can be done?**

Prevention along with early detection and treatment.

**What is the SRHA Response?**

In 2016, the then regional NCD team comprising of PHN Karen Nelson and Dr. Nadine Williams recognized the gap in awareness and screening uptake. Nurse Nelson birthed the idea of having a regional cancer awareness event in keeping with the international observance of World Cancer Day. This event was to be held annually and hosted by each parish in turn with a view to increase cancer awareness and boost the available screening activities. Though the conceptualizers of the event have moved on to serve in other areas within the SRHA, the event continues to be owned and held by the parishes with the guidance of the present Regional NCD team led by Dr. Yasmine Hanna.

This year the event will be hosted by the parish of Manchester, where the Manchester Health Department team in collaboration with the Regional NCD team are already preparing to have a successful event to include screening, vaccination and nutrition related activities also a grand opening ceremony and symposium. The event will be held on February 15, 2024 at the Mandeville Parish Church with screening starting at 9:00 a.m.

A gap was also identified in the turnaround time for pap smears. Best practice was identified in another region and as such advocacy was made for our region to have a similar intervention. After much labor through our Regional Technical Director and the board, a private lab in Kingston was approved, contract was awarded and samples have started being sent to that lab since late November 2023. We are pleased to say that the turnaround time for our pap smear is now comparable with the best turnaround times across the island and results are being returned within four weeks.

Cancer is not a death sentence, but it can be costly to treat. Prevention is always better than having to cure. Early detection means early intervention and a longer, healthier life. Your Regional Health Authority has taken major steps to make some screening services free, available and accessible. Individuals now need to take their own action to prevent, detect and treat early.

**Submitted by: PHN Kerry-Ann Maxwell-McCreath  
Regional NCD Surveillance Officer, SRHA**





# HR And You:

“Appointments”

A small icon showing three stylized figures standing together, representing a team or group.

## Knowledge Bytes

**1.4 Entry into the Service**  
Persons entering the public Service may be appointed on a temporary or permanent basis, at the discretion of the appointing authority.

**1.4.1 Temporary Appointment**  
In instances where the appointment is to a position which is on the Public Service Establishment, is clearly vacant and the candidate has met all the requirements of the position, the temporary appointment should not normally exceed six (6) months.

**1.4.2 Permanent Appointment**  
Upon permanent appointment persons will receive a letter of appointment from the appointing authority setting out the terms and conditions of the appointment, which may include the requirement for probation and medical certification.

*Excerpt for the Staff Orders for the Public Service, 2004*



**APPOINTMENTS**



**Southern Regional Health Authority**  
*Leadership • Commitment • Quality • Progress*

# SUBMIT AN ARTICLE

We welcome your input.

Please submit your articles and feedback for the February edition to:

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people  
evaluating  
their own  
sin



people  
evaluating  
the sins  
of others



The Lighter Side

