Southern Regional Health Authority
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The Southern Pulse

Newsletter

Volume 12 Issue 7 July 2026

May Pen and Black River Hospitals Get Donation of Supplies



State Minister in the Ministry of Health and Wellness, Hon. Krystal Lee (centre), and Chairman, Southern Regional Health Authority (SHRA), Michael Stern (right), look on as United Kingdom (UK)-based Jamaican businessman, Branatic Neufville, highlights the features of a hospital gown, which was among supplies valued at J$5 million that he donated to the May Pen and Black River hospitals. The items were handed over at the May Pen Hospital in Clarendon on Thursday (July 16).

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In the News: Southern Regional Health Authority

May Pen and Black River Hospitals Get Donation of Supplies



United Kingdom (UK)-based Jamaican businessman, Branatic Neufville (second left), for the donation of items valued at $5 million to benefit the May Pen and Black River hospitals. The items were handed over at the May Pen Hospital in Clarendon on Thursday (July 16). Looking on are Mayor of May Pen, Councillor Joel Williams (left) and Chairman, Southern Regional Health Authority (SHRA), Michael Stern.

The May Pen and Black River hospitals have received a donation of supplies valued at $5 million from United Kingdom (UK)-based Jamaican businessman, Branatic Neufville.

The items include beds, bedside lockers, a heart monitor, overbed tables and sundries.

Speaking at the handover at the May Pen Hospital in Clarendon on Thursday (July 16), State Minister in the Health and Wellness Ministry, Hon. Krystal Lee, expressed gratitude to Mr. Neufville

She noted that the contribution represents a critical investment in the Ministry's post-Hurricane Melissa recovery effort. The State Minister hailed the staff who were on the front line during the hurricane, noting that persons were called upon to function under extraordinary circumstances.

"Through the dedication of our healthcare teams, we continued to provide care, comfort and hope to those who needed it the most," she pointed out.

Miss Lee informed that more than 500 local healthcare staff worked alongside international medical personnel "to ensure that service delivery reached where it was most needed".

Mr. Neufville, in his remarks, said he was moved to assist after seeing the devastation caused by the storm.

He proposed the training of young people, from grade nine, in first aid and the use of blood pressure monitors so that they can help elderly relatives at home.He said that members of the security forces should also be equipped to respond to health emergencies.

"I have noticed for many years, when there is an accident scene, the first person called is the police… maybe it's time we begin looking into how to train our police as first responders and paramedics," Mr. Neufville suggested.

"We all know that the way we handle a patient in the beginning can determine whether that person lives or dies. Correct training is vital," he added.

Source: The Jamaica Information Service

In the News: Southern Regional Health Authority

Health Ministry Finalising Renovation Costings for Hurricane-Damaged Health Centres



Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, cuts the ribbon to mark the official reopening of the Craighead Health Centre in Manchester on Thursday (July 9), following renovations at a cost of $45.6 million under Operation REFRESH. The Minister is joined by the National Health Fund (NHF) Institutional Benefits Manager, Collie Smith (left); and Chairman, Southern Regional Health Authority (SHRA), Michael Stern (right).

The Ministry of Health and Wellness is completing assessments to finalise costings for the renovation of health centres impacted by Hurricane Melissa.

Portfolio Minister, Hon. Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, said that about 100 health centres in the five worst affected parishes are being prioritised for attention.

The parishes are St. Elizabeth, Trelawny, Hanover, Westmoreland and St. James.

Dr. Tufton informed that engineers are in the field doing the analysis and costings.

"They (the engineers) were in St. Elizabeth… visiting the facilities, and we anticipate that in the next month or so, we will have a better handle on what the costs are and then we will start the more substantial renovation," he said.

Dr. Tufton was addressing the reopening of the Craighead Health Centre in Manchester on Thursday (July 9), which was renovated at a cost of $45.6 million under Operation REFRESH.

The works undertaken included roof repairs, providing modern windows and doors, installing air-conditioning units and solar panels for energy efficiency, tiling of the floors, furnishing, and upgrading of bathroom facilities for staff and patients.

An old staff cottage was repurposed into a new clinical area with resilient concrete walls.

A property was also fenced to improve security and a new 20-lot parking area was built.

An initiative of the Ministry and funded by the National Health Fund (NHF), Operation Refresh is aimed at rehabilitating health centres across the island, enhancing their aesthetic appeal, functionality, and overall experience.

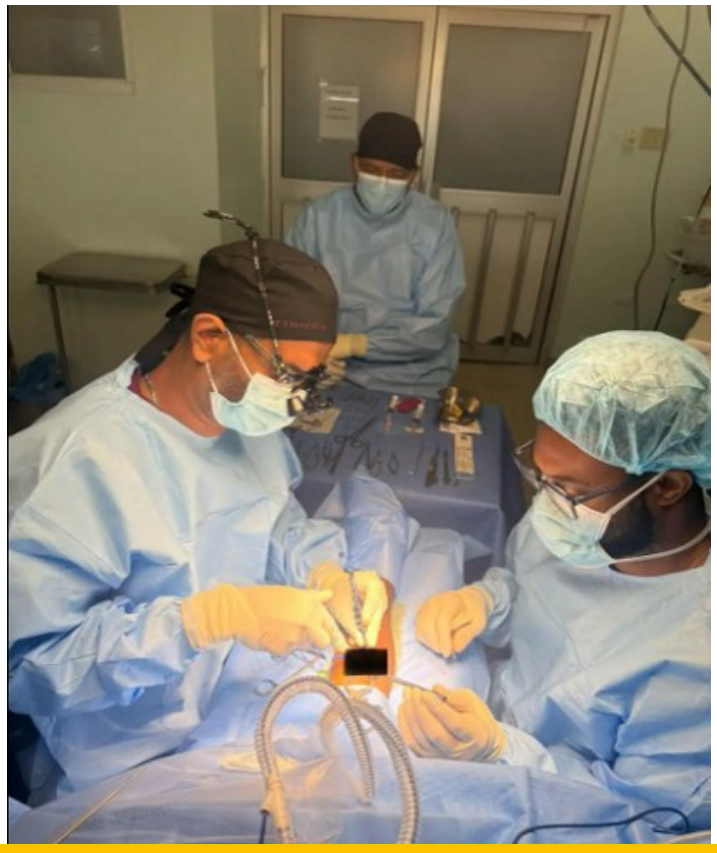
Dr. Tufton said that the project is well-advanced with one facility being reopened almost weekly.

"While Operation REFRESH continues, we are also looking at substantial renovations of some that are under the Health System Strengthening Programme. Some will be opened in Old Harbour, St. Jago and Portmore," he said.

Source: Jamaica Information Service

In The News: Southern Regional Health Authority

Hundreds of Renal Patients Benefit as Mandeville Hospital Achieves Milestone Fistula Procedures



Consultant Dr. Varunesh Chand (left) and Dr. Moses Onoh (right) completing a right proximal radial artery to cephalic vein A-V fistula to facilitate hemodialysis, while Operation Theatre Technician, Mr. Owen assists.

Hundreds of patients living with chronic kidney disease across southern Jamaica gained improved access to haemodialysis treatment through Mandeville Regional Hospital's (MRH) arteriovenous (AV) fistula programme, which completed a milestone of 300 surgeries over the past five years.

Dr. Varunesh Chand, Consultant General Surgeon at the MRH explained that the surgery, which involves creating a connection or anastomosis between an artery and a vein, typically in the forearm or arm, provides the vascular access required for dialysis treatment.

“AV fistulas are widely regarded as the preferred access option because they are more durable, carry a lower risk of infection, and generally result in fewer complications than dialysis catheters” he added.

He pointed out that many patients are now able to access the procedure closer to home; as prior to the establishment of the service at the MRH in 2012, patients in southern Jamaica had to travel to Kingston to undergo the procedure.

The service was introduced by Dr. Akil Baker, now a Consultant at the University Hospital of the West Indies, and has continued to grow under the leadership of Dr. Chand, since 2018.

As the main referral hospital serving southern Jamaica, MRH provides dialysis services to approximately 200 patients each year. To meet the growing demand, the hospital maintains a dedicated weekly operating schedule for AV fistula procedures.

With the adoption of surgeon based preoperative vein mapping and good administrative support the service has become efficient enough to even accommodate some referrals from the Spanish Town Hospital thereby helping to offload the case burden at hospitals in the corporate area.

Being the only regional hospital offering this service, the quality of care delivered through the programme has also been reflected in its outcomes. A review conducted in 2024 revealed that nearly 80 percent of fistulas matured successfully and were ready for use in haemodialysis, a success rate comparable to that achieved by specialised centres internationally.

“Timely referral for access creation is also essential to reduce morbidity faced by patients. In chronic kidney disease, ideally, we want to have a functional AV fistula even before the patient starts dialysis. Dr. Kristen Little, Sister Marika Davis-Miller and the rest of the renal team at MRH have done an excellent job in getting patients evaluated as soon as possible” Dr. Chand added.

The achievement underscores MRH's ongoing efforts to expand specialised services and ensure that patients living with chronic kidney disease can access high-quality care closer to home.

Source: Southern Regional Health Authority

In The News: Southern Regional Health Authority

Jervine Richards Defies Illness to Become Nurse of the Year



Newly crowned Nurse of the Year Jervine Richards.

Just a few years after nearly walking away from nursing because a rare autoimmune disease made even the simplest duties difficult, newly crowned LASCO Chin Foundation/ Nurses Association of Jamaica (NAJ) Nurse of the Year Jervine Richards has overcome a diagnosis that once threatened to end the career she loves.

The 29-year-old Clarendon native, who was diagnosed with myasthenia gravis in 2019, had reached a point where she questioned whether she could continue working as a nurse.

"I did consider quitting my job. I decided I was going to leave because I could not manage," Richards told THE STAR. "But I got on treatment and it has led me to be here today. Seven years later, I am doing much better now. I'm stable."

Richards, who grew up in Frankfield before relocating to Spaulding with her parents, said the uncertainty surrounding her condition made her early struggles even more difficult.

Myasthenia gravis is an autoimmune disease that causes muscle weakness and can affect the eyes, face, hands, legs, and even the muscles responsible for breathing.

Before receiving a diagnosis, Richards battled daily challenges on the job without knowing the cause.

"I didn't know what was happening, and it made working as a nurse extremely difficult," she said.

The condition eventually became overwhelming, forcing her to consider leaving the profession she had worked so hard to enter.

Today, however, Richards is celebrating one of the proudest moments of her career after capturing the LASCO Chin Foundation/NAJ Nurse of the Year title — an achievement she had set as a personal goal before turning 30.

"Last year, I sat as a guest in the audience of the LASCO Chin Foundation Nurse of the Year awards and I told myself I had to accomplish that before I turned 30," she said. "It wasn't the only factor because, in 2017 ,I placed third in the Nursing Student of the Year competition. So, from that moment, I knew I was looking forward to joining the Nurse of the Year competition."

Preparing for the competition required dedication and sacrifice.

She admitted that she was concerned about the physical demands of the competition, particularly the photo sessions, and whether she would be able to maintain her energy throughout the activities.

To manage the condition, Richards carefully balances her medication, workload and rest.

With the national title now secured, Richards hopes her journey will encourage others facing health challenges that threaten to derail their dreams.

"My encouragement would be to trust God. I think that's the first thing. Above everything else you have to trust God."

For the full story visit: The Jamaica Star

Facilities on the Move

Lionel Town Hospital Celebrates Extraordinary Employees

The Lionel Town Hospital in Clarendon recognised members of its team during its Performance Management and Appraisal System (PMAS) Awards Ceremony on Thursday, July 23, 2026, celebrating staff whose dedication, professionalism and outstanding performance continue to make a positive difference in patient care and service delivery.

Congratulations to all the awardees, and thank you for your continued commitment to delivering compassionate, high-quality healthcare to the people we serve.











Facilities on the Move

Manchester Health Department Honours Outstanding Staff

The Manchester Health Department recognised members of its team during its Performance Management and Appraisal System award ceremony in July, celebrating staff for their dedication, professionalism and commitment to excellence in public health service delivery.

The ceremony highlighted the valuable contributions of team members whose hard work continues to make a difference in the communities they serve. Congratulations to all the awardees.











Facilities on the Move

Mandeville Regional Hospital Celebrates Staff Dedication and Achievement

The Mandeville Regional Hospital in Manchester recognised members of its team during its Performance Management and Appraisal System Awards Ceremony on Wednesday, July 22, 2026, celebrating staff whose outstanding performance, dedication and commitment have made a positive impact on patient care and the organisation.

Recognising excellence helps to boost staff morale, encourage professional growth and inspire a culture of high performance across the hospital.

Congratulations to all the awardees, and thank you for your continued service and commitment to delivering quality healthcare to the people we serve.













Facilities on the Move

Percy Junor Hospital Recognises Top Performers

The Percy Junor Hospital in Manchester recognised members of its team during its Performance Management and Appraisal System Awards Ceremony on Thursday, July 23, 2026, celebrating staff whose outstanding performance, dedication and commitment continue to make a meaningful impact on patient care and the delivery of quality healthcare.

Congratulations to all the awardees, and thank you for your unwavering service, professionalism and commitment to caring for the people we serve.









Facilities on the Move

SRHA Regional Office Recognises Staff Excellence and Dedication

The Southern Regional Health Authority recognised members of its Regional Office team during its Performance Management and Appraisal System awards ceremony on Monday, July 27, 2026.

The ceremony highlighted the dedication, hard work and achievements of staff who continue to support the delivery of quality healthcare across the region. Congratulations to all our awardees.















Facilities on the Move

St. Elizabeth Health Department Recognizes Outstanding Service

The St. Elizabeth Health Department recognised members of its team during its Performance Management and Appraisal System (PMAS) Awards Ceremony on Thursday, July 23, 2026, honouring staff whose dedication, professionalism and outstanding performance continue to strengthen public health services across the parish.

Congratulations to all the awardees, and thank you for your continued service, compassion and commitment to advancing quality health care in St. Elizabeth.











Facilities on the Move

Healthcare Workers hit the Field for Exciting Football Playoffs

As part of Healthcare Workers Appreciation Month, players from healthcare facilities across the southern region came together for an exciting football playoffs.

The event brought teams together in a spirit of friendly competition, teamwork and camaraderie, providing an opportunity for healthcare workers to connect, unwind and celebrate their dedication to serving the people of the region.













Facilities on the Move

Healthcare Workers Bring the Heat to the Netball Court

The southern region brought its competitive spirit to the netball court as players from healthcare facilities across the region came together for exciting playoffs as part of Healthcare Workers Appreciation Activities.

With skill, teamwork and plenty of energy on display, the matches created an atmosphere of friendly competition while giving healthcare workers an opportunity to connect, have fun and celebrate the bonds that make the southern region stronger.















Facilities on the Move

Healthcare Workers Bring Their A-Game to the Southern Region Cricket Playoffs

The southern region brought the spirit of competition to the cricket field as players from healthcare facilities across the region faced off in riveting playoffs as part of Healthcare Workers Appreciation Month activities.

From powerful batting to sharp bowling and spirited teamwork, the matches showcased the talent, and competitive energy of healthcare workers while creating a space to connect, unwind and celebrate together.

























Facilities on the Move

Making the Right Move: Healthcare Workers Face off in Domino Playoffs

The competition continued across the southern region as healthcare workers from facilities throughout the region went head-to-head in exciting domino playoffs during Healthcare Workers Appreciation Month.

With strategy, quick thinking and plenty of friendly rivalry on display, the event brought colleagues together to connect, unwind and celebrate the teamwork and camaraderie that extend beyond the workplace.













Facilities on the Move

Healthcare Workers Come Together in Celebration of Faith and Service

Highlights from our National Healthcare Workers Appreciation Church Service on Sunday, July 5, 2026 at the St. Matthew's Anglican Church in Santa Cruz, St. Elizabeth.

We give thanks for the opportunity to serve with commitment, service and sacrifice.

Happy Healthcare Workers Appreciation Month.













Facilities on the Move

HEALTH CARE WORKERS APPRECIATION MONTH SPORTS & FUN DAY 2026

What a blast! The Southern Regional Health Authority Healthcare Workers Appreciation Month Sports Day on Thursday, July 30, 2026 was filled with energy, teamwork, friendly competition and plenty of memorable moments.

From exciting races to cheers from the side-lines, our healthcare workers from Clarendon, Manchester and St. Elizabeth came together to celebrate wellness, camaraderie and sportsmanship.

Take a look at some of the highlights from an unforgettable day.

















Facilities on the Move

HEALTH CARE WORKERS APPRECIATION MONTH SPORTS & FUN DAY 2026













Facilities on the Move

HEALTH CARE WORKERS APPRECIATION MONTH SPORTS & FUN DAY 2026











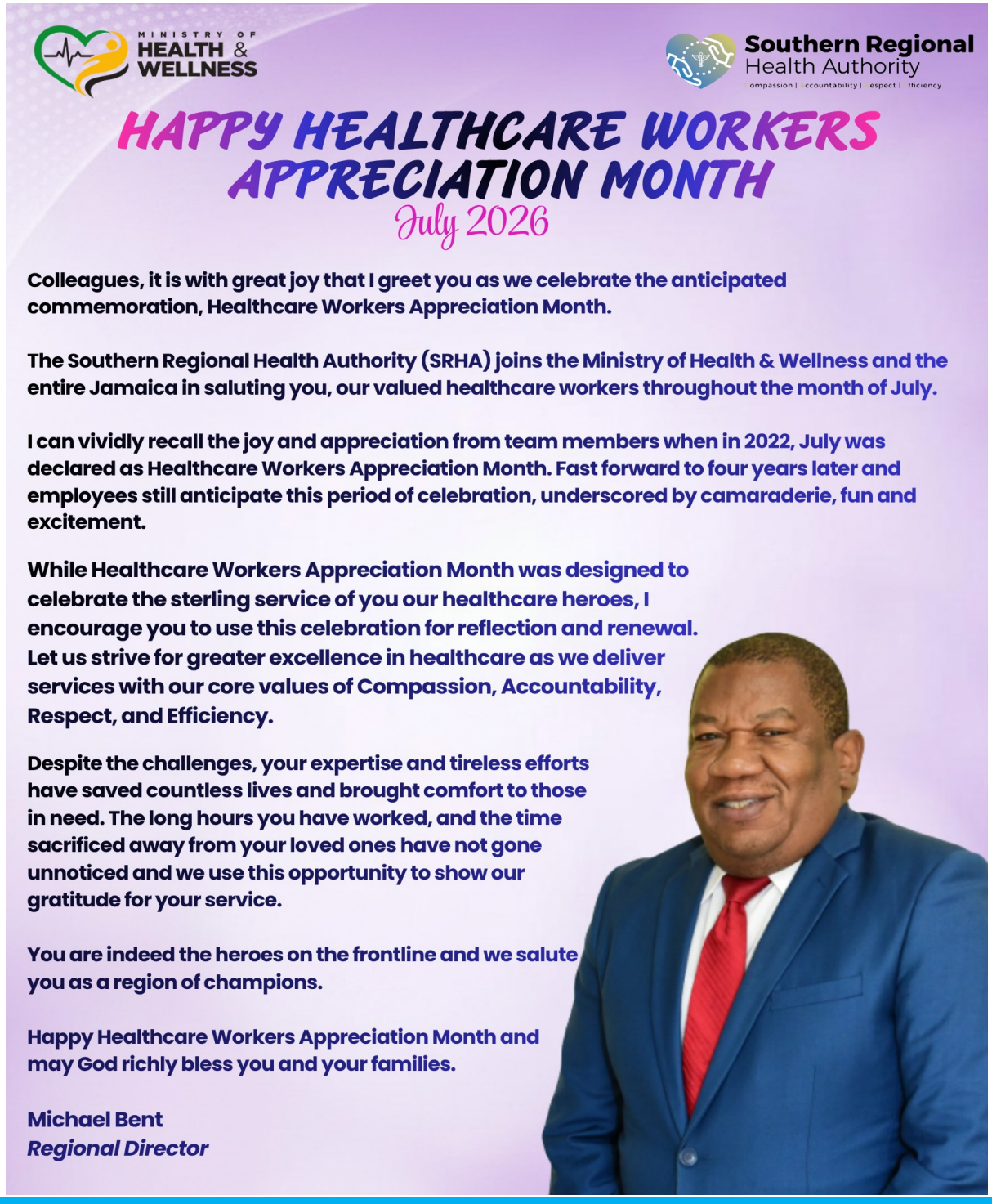


Regional Director's Message

Celebrating Our Region of Champions!

This July, we proudly celebrated the incredible healthcare workers across the Southern Regional Health Authority who continue to serve with compassion, resilience, and unwavering dedication.

Your long hours, sacrifice, and commitment to caring for others make a lasting difference in the lives of the people and communities we serve. Thank you for all that you do. Together, we are truly a Region of Champions.



Staff Highlight

Congratulations to our Award-Winning Nurses!

The Southern Regional Health Authority proudly celebrates Jervine Richards, Registered Nurse/Midwife at Percy Junor Hospital, on being named the 2026 LASCO Chin Foundation and NAJ Nurse of the Year, and Michelle Hales-Thompson, Departmental Nurse Manager, on placing 2nd runner-up.

Your dedication and commitment to excellence continue to make the SRHA proud.



Staff Highlight

A Crown Worth Celebrating!

Congratulations to Dr. Alicia Swaby-Spencer of Mandeville Regional Hospital on being crowned Mrs. Universe Jamaica 2026.

Your Southern Regional Health Authority family is proud of you and wishes you a successful reign as you continue to inspire excellence in healthcare and beyond.

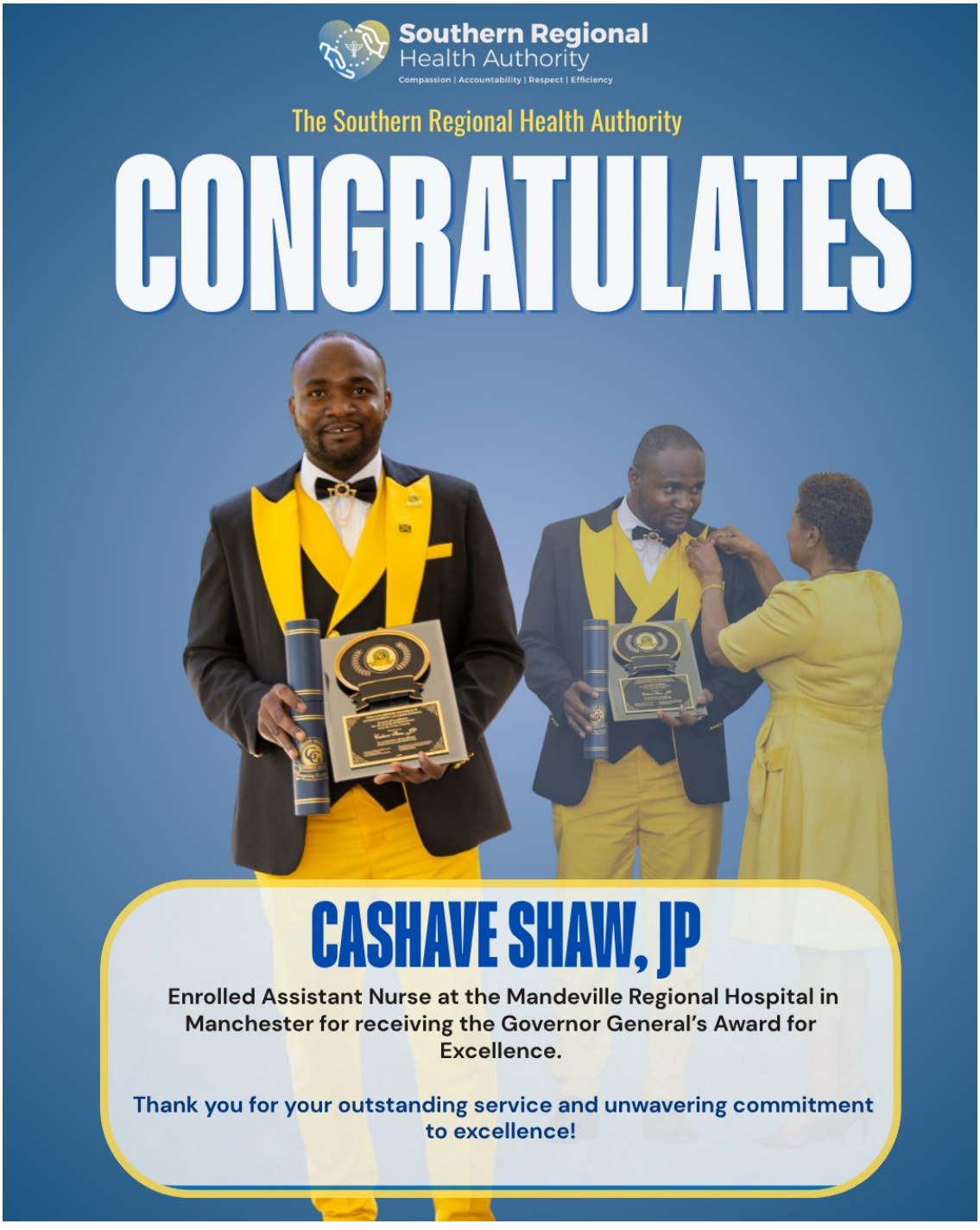


Staff Highlight

Service That Stands Out

Congratulations to Enrolled Assistant Nurse Cashave Shaw, JP, from the Mandeville Regional Hospital in Manchester, on receiving the Governor General's Award for Excellence!

Your unwavering dedication and commitment to service have earned this well-deserved national recognition. Your SRHA family celebrates this remarkable achievement and wishes you continued success.



HR And You:

"Interim Corner"



Infohub

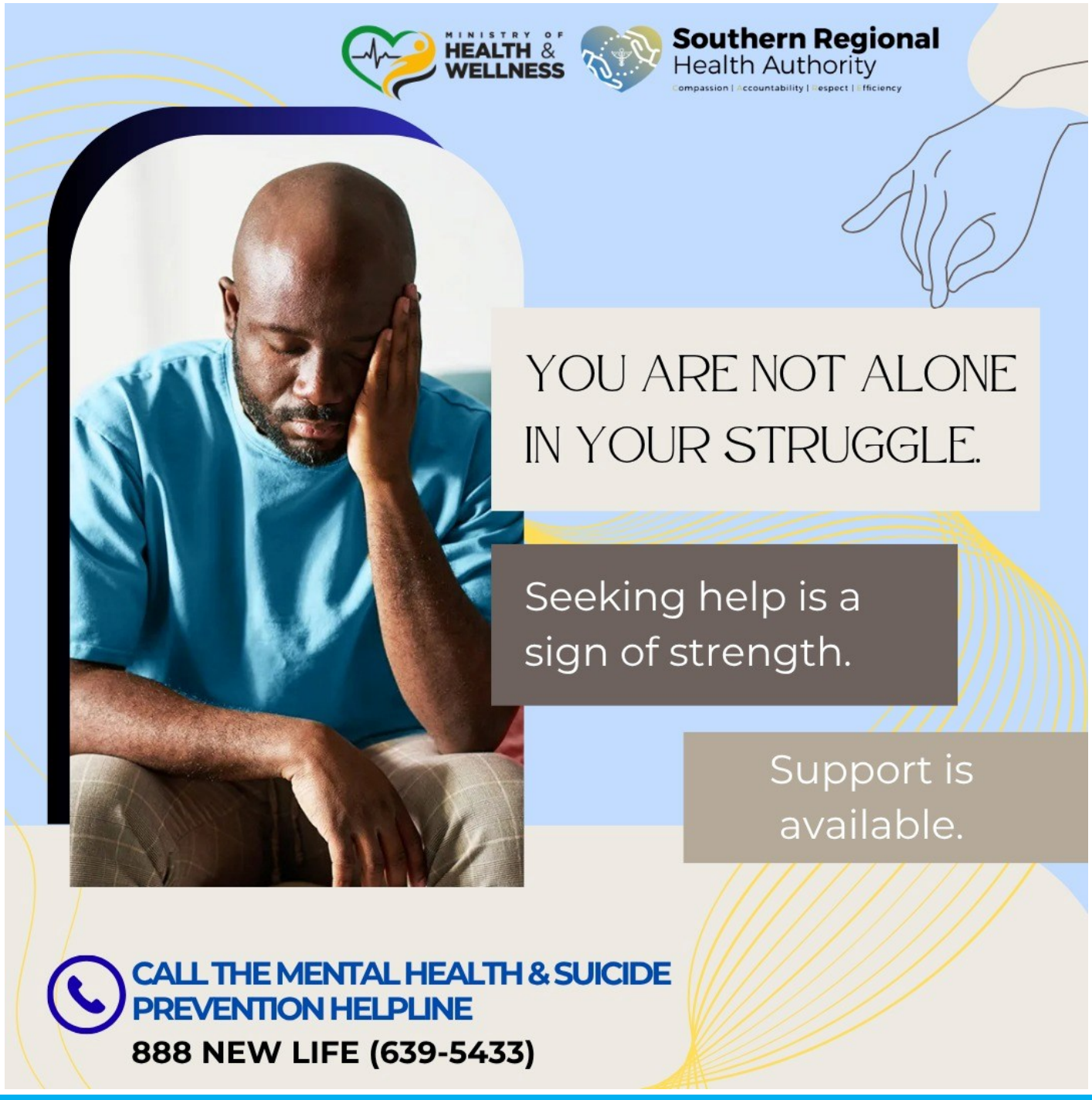




Wellness Bytes

“Seeking Help is a Sign of Strength”

Health & Wellness



The Culinary Corner

Ackee and Chickpeas



Ingredients

- 1-13 oz can garbanzo beans
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 tablespoon olive oil
- 2-14 oz cans Ackee in salt water brine
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- 1 small yellow onion
- 2 teaspoon scotch bonnet pepper, mined
- 3 sprigs thyme
- ¼ green bell pepper, small diced
- 1 small plum tomato, small diced
- 2 tablespoon cold pressed coconut oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Method

- Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.

- On a baking sheet, place drained garbanzo beans and season with salt, cayenne, paprika, onion powder, garlic powder and olive oil.
- Use your hands to toss the beans in the seasonings until they are fully coated.
- Place the tray on the middle shelf in the oven and bake for 15 mins.
- Heat coconut oil in a large skillet over medium heat.
- Once the oil is fragrant a bit frothy, saute onions for about 2-3 minutes until translucent.
- Add scallions and bell peppers and cook for about a minute.
- Add tomatoes and scotch bonnets and allow them to cook for an additional minute, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking.
- Add roasted garbanzo beans to the pan and toss in with alliums for about 1 minute.
- Add ackee, salt and black pepper and gently toss with a spatula to combine. The spatula will ensure that the Ackee stays whole and doesn't become mushy.
- Serve hot with your choice of

Source: Jamdown Foodie

SUBMIT AN ARTICLE

We welcome your input.

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

The Corporate Communications & Public Relations Branch

Email: latoya.laylor@srha.gov.jm

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The Lighter Side

