



SOUTHERN REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

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PRESS RELEASE

April 11, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

“Fatherlessness- Most Significant Factor Contributing to Broken Families in Caribbean”: Regional Technical Director

Regional Technical Director for the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA), Dr. Michael Coombs has announced that fatherlessness is the most significant factor that contributes to broken families in Jamaica and other Caribbean countries.

According to Dr. Coombs, based on scientific evidence, this variable also has implications for the majority of social and public health challenges including crime and violence, mental illness, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, child and adult sexual abuse, gender-based violence, teen suicide, youth incarceration, poor performance in schools, unattached youths, gang membership, and the cycle of failed traditional marriages with tragic consequences.

He was addressing the topic of “Fatherlessness in Jamaica and the Caribbean” at the 3rd Caribbean Regional Conference of the World Congress of Families held in Barbados, April 8-9 under the theme, 'The Natural Family: Key to a Healthy, Stable, and Prosperous Caribbean Community'.

“This constitutes nothing less than a social and public health emergency in need of urgent interventions through partnerships at all levels. Fatherlessness is perpetuated by several important factors which includes cultural, social, ideological factors and especially the absence of holistic male development and socialization interventions” Dr. Coombs said.

Dr. Coombs who is also the chair and founder of the National Association for the Family (NAF) informed the conference of a holistic male development initiative being developed in Jamaica to address the plethora of male-related issues affecting young males, communities and the wider society, including fatherlessness and fractured families.

The initiative titled 'Man-Up, a Call to Healthy, Responsible Manhood', is being implemented through a partnership between the SRHA, the NAF,
(more)

Chairman: ; **Vice Chairman:** **Directors:** **Regional Director and Secretary:** Michael Bent; **Regional Technical Director:** Dr Michael Coombs; **CEO Mandeville Regional Hospital:** Alwyn Miller; **SMO, Mandeville Regional Hospital:** Dr Everton McIntosh



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the Ministry of Education and the Church. The initiative was launched at a male retreat in February with the intention of being rolled out in schools and colleges, youth groups and the church.

Other issues which were explored at the Conference included the impact on families of secular world views, the importance of traditional marriage to social wellbeing, public health and national development.

Dr. Coombs noted that: "A serious concern highlighted was the grave harm being done to children as young as 3 years year old through the current sex education programmes in Caribbean countries including that being implemented currently in Jamaica. Among the harmful content being taught to children is that their sexual identity can change, based on their circumstances and how they feel."

The Conference facilitated speakers and participants from the Caribbean, Latin America, the USA, Canada and Nigeria.



Dr. Coombs addresses the 3rd Caribbean Regional Conference of the World Congress of Families in Barbados.

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