SOUTHERN REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

3 BRUMALIA ROAD, MANDEVILLE, MANCHESTER, JAMAICA WI

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PRESS RELEASE

May 1, 2018
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Get Vaccinated- Jamaicans Urged to Improve Defense Against Vaccine Preventable Diseases

The Clarendon Health Department is appealing to Jamaicans to get vaccinated as a safe way to strengthen their defense against vaccine preventable diseases. The call was made at the 16th commemoration of Vaccination Week in the Americas at the Canaan Heights Community Centre in Clarendon recently.

Regional Nursing Supervisor at the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA), Nadine Johnson Griffiths explained that this year's slogan, "Strengthen your defense! #GetVax #VaccinesWork" uses the idea of strengthening the defense on a soccer/football team as a metaphor for strengthening one's defense against vaccine-preventable diseases through vaccination.

"When vaccines are given, it produces antibodies which protect against diseases before diseases develop. If a certain proportion of the population is vaccinated then less vaccine preventable diseases would be circulating in the population, which is our goal " Nurse Johnson Griffiths explained.

Regional Technical Director for the SRHA, Dr. Vitillius Holder pointed out that the Government has placed great emphasis on the importance of vaccination in fighting diseases, which has resulted in the rare occurrence of certain diseases including mumps, measles, polio and tuberculosis.

"When we look at our data we find out that many of our ladies are developing cervical cancer and therefore the Government is on a drive to vaccinate our girls in schools. We have vaccines to strengthen your defense against types of conditions like pneumonia that can kill you, so it is important that persons understand that vaccines help us to fight diseases" the Regional Technical Director said.

(more)

Chairman: Wayne Chen; **Vice Chairman**; Michael Stern **Board Members**: Marcus Greenwood, Krishan James, Stafford Haughton, Lorraine Green Mason, Lennox Powell, Dr Lloyd Reynolds, Winston Maragh, Dr St Aubyn Bartlett, Dr Lundie Richards, **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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For her part, Medical Officer of Health for Clarendon, Dr. Kimberly Scarlett-Campbell noted that the success of vaccination in Jamaica has contributed to the development of tourism in the country.

"When our athletes leave to represent Jamaica they are fully vaccinated. When foreigners come to Jamaica they know that they are not coming to contract any type of vaccine preventable diseases and this contributes to the growth of tourism in Jamaica because our citizens are well vaccinated" Dr. Scarlett-Campbell said.

Each year, as part of the week-long commemoration, more than 40 countries and territories in the Americas collaborate to raise awareness on the importance of immunization, making a special effort to reach people who may not have regular access to health services.

Dr. Scarlett-Campbell noted that the health team vaccinated over 80 persons from the Canaan Heights community while some 200 residents from the Bucknor community, both in Clarendon were vaccinated. She added more than 170 persons from the fishing villages in Clarendon were vaccinated and 66 workers from the National Solid Waste Management Authority received vaccines.

(more)

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Picture 1

Public Health Nurse at the Chapelton Community Hospital in Clarendon, Olufunke Adetola vaccinates Tafori Morrison, teacher at the Coates Pen Basic School in Clarendon at the commemoration of Vaccination Week in the Americas in Canaan Heights.

(more)

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Picture 2

This resident from the Canaan Heights Community in Clarendon collects brochures on the importance of vaccination after being vaccinated at the commemoration of Vaccination Week in the Americas.

(more)

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Picture 3

Some of the residents including children who turned up for vaccination at the Canaan Heights community.

-30-

For more information contact:
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