Southern Regional Health Authority

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PRESS RELEASE

September 21, 2018
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Care With Compassion- Health Ministry Aims to Improve Customer Experience

Despite the challenges in the public health sector, Health Minister, Dr. Christopher Tufton believes the sector has been responding well.

Minister Tufton shared that in 2017, 1.8 million persons visited the health centres across the island, while 1.2 million persons accessed services at hospitals, with 185,000 spending an average of 5 days, noting that of the 185, 000 persons admitted to hospitals, the mortality rate was 4.5 percent.

"In a country with so many challenges where you have an unusually high case of trauma, in one way or another; a country that has an unusually high case of non-communicable diseases all leading to one direction ultimately, the public health system. We (public health system) are so heavily depended on and I believe for the most part, risen to the challenges in providing good clinical care and the manifestation of that are in the statistics" Minister Tufton explained.

The Health Minister added that the demand for Jamaican clinicians internationally also speaks to the quality of professionals in the public health system. He noted that public perception of the public health system, which is not always based on personal experience, sometimes puts the public health system in a negative light.

"Oftentimes it is based on what people hear, what they see on the television because it only takes one dissatisfied person to create a national perception. It is a disservice to those who serve and who serve well. Too often, sometimes it's not a patient issue but perhaps one worker who may have been frustrated that day and administered care in a manner that is uncaring and that perception is multiplied several times."

The Minister said an important part of the overall response to public health, is a mechanism to firstly ensure that all public health employees begin to enhance, develop, build and strengthen a culture of customer

(more)

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service.

Minister Tufton pointed out that this mechanism is the compassionate care programme, which was launched at the Black River Hospital in St. Elizabeth on Thursday, September 20. The programme seeks to begin a process of emphasizing the customer service component of public health and delivering care with compassion.

The compassionate care programme comprises three components including training of staff in customer service and enhancing basic infrastructure such as the accident and emergency areas to ensure that patients wait in areas of comfort with pictorial messages of advice and encouragement. The third component is volunteerism, which seeks to boost partnerships and engage Jamaicans in offering compassionate care with the supervision of staff.

Some 200 staff members at the Back River Hospital were trained in customer service and have expressed commitment to delivering quality care with compassion. Renovation works at the hospital's accident & emergency department included enhancement of the aesthetics to include murals with health messages, refurbished bathrooms, installation of air conditioning and the placement of a television set to display health messages.

(more)

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Picture 1

Minister of Health Dr. Christopher Tufton speaks to a patient in the renovated Accident and Emergency department at the Black River Hospital, as part of the compassionate care programme.

(more)

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Picture 2

A section of the renovated Accident & Emergency department of the Black River Hospital in an effort to inform, educate and encourage patients, under the compassionate care programme of the Ministry of Health.

(more)

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Picture 3

Minister of Health, Dr. Christopher Tufton (5th left) cuts the ribbon to the renovated Accident & Emergency Department at the Black River Hospital. Looking on are: Regional Director of the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA), Michael Bent (left); CEO of the Black River Hospital (BRH), Diana Brown-Miller (2nd left), Chairman of the SRHA Board, Wayne Chen (3rd left); Miss World Jamaica 2018 and Physiotherapist at the BRH, Kadijah Robinson (4th left); Custos of St. Elizabeth, Hon Beryl Rochester (right); Member of Parliament for South West St. Elizabeth, Hon. Floyd Green (2nd right) and Parish Manager for St. Elizabeth Health Services, Sean Brissett.

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