Southern Regional Health Authority

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PRESS RELEASE

November 29, 2018
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Students and Teachers Trained to Become Ambassadors for Healthier Lifestyle

As part of the Jamaica Moves in Schools programme, which will strengthen the capacity of the school community to become a healthy setting for learning and working, the Southern Regional Health Authority recently trained 58 high school students and 15 teachers as ambassadors.

A partnership between the Ministries of Health and Education, through the Jamaica Moves initiative, the programme aims to increase the number of students engaging in moderate level of physical activity by five percent; increase the number of students that make healthier food choices by five percent; increase the number of schools that have integrated identification of at-risk students for non-communicable diseases and facilitate appropriate intervention by 20 percent from baseline.

According to the Ministry of Health, "non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases and cancers are one of the major threats to sustainable development in the 21st century. These four major NCDs account for 67 percent of all deaths and 24 percent of premature deaths (occurring between 30 to 70 years of age) in 2015."

The Ministry added that research in Jamaica tracking body mass index at 7 – 8 years and then at 11 – 12 years revealed obesity rates for study participants increased from 3.5 percent to 9.5 percent, representing an increase of 171 percent, which is in keeping with the trend world-wide in similar middle-income countries.

The Ministry explained that in response to the epidemic of childhood obesity, the Jamaica Moves in Schools programme will utilize health promotion strategies including public health policy, supportive environments, strengthening of community actions, reorienting health services and building alliances with groups particularly the media.

(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 (Ag.):** Dr Vitillius Holder; **CEO Mandeville Regional Hospital:** Alwyn Miller; **SMO, Mandeville Regional Hospital:** Dr Everton McIntosh

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These strategies will include: 5 minutes stretch breaks in schools, National "School Moves Day" annually; implementation of school nutrition standards; implementation of the Interim Guidelines for Sweetened Beverages; institutionalization of a mandatory water day/fruit or vegetable day; facilitation of annual measurements of students' Body Mass Index (BMI); registry of students identified with NCDs and routine medical checks.

The students, teachers and facilitators from 15 high schools in Manchester, St. Elizabeth and Clarendon participated in a residential camp, November 23 to 25 at the Oceanview Bible Camp in St. Elizabeth, which placed emphasis on nutrition and physical activity and age appropriate and routine health checks.

The ambassadors from the primary school level will be trained shortly.

Picture 1

The group of ambassadors from the Winston Jones High School in Manchester (yellow) and the team from the Southern Regional Health Authority.

(more)

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Picture 2

Students, teachers and staff from the Southern Regional Health Authority who participated in the training of ambassadors for the Jamaica Moves in Schools programme.

(more)

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Picture 3

Students from the Denbigh High School participate in a group session which examined the food based dietary guidelines for Jamaica.

-30-

For more information contact:
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