



PRESS RELEASE

March 5, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SRHA Recognizes 975 Nurses and Midwives for Exceptional Service and Sacrifice

The Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) has recognized 975 nurses and midwives for their sterling contribution, service and sacrifice to healthcare, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The nurses and midwives from the parishes of Clarendon, St. Elizabeth and Manchester were recognized at a virtual ceremony on Tuesday, March 2, and received tokens of appreciation and special awards.

Renowned Public Health Specialist, Professor Peter Figueroa who delivered the keynote address, commended the nurses, noting that special tribute must be paid to nurses who have remained in Jamaica, as the country loses scores of nurses annually.

"Nurses are the backbone of the health service and the system would collapse without our nurses. Given the challenges of COVID-19 and the shortages of nurses and equipment and the heavy work load, there are times when all of us do slip, where we get tired and weary and not at our best. This is why team work is so critical and we must be supportive of each other. Let us support and reach out and encourage each other" Professor Figueroa said.

Professor Figueroa used the opportunity to encourage persons to take the vaccines, which will be given shortly to different groups of the population in phases, in an effort to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I would encourage everyone to recognize that the vaccines are safe and effective and at the earliest opportunity you get to be vaccinated, I urge you to take the vaccines. As health workers, we have to set the example for the rest of the nation by taking the vaccines, as we are helping to protect ourselves and to protect others" Professor Figueroa added.

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Chairman: Wayne Chen; Vice Chairman: Michael Stern, **Board Members:** Dr. St. Aubyn Bartlett, Lorraine Green Mason, Marcus Greenwood, Stafford Haughton, Winston Maragh, Lennox Powell, Dr. Lloyd Reynolds, Albert Williams, **Permanent Secretary's Nominee:** Dr. Naydene Williams, **Regional Director and Secretary:** Michael Bent; **Regional Technical Director:** Dr. Vitillius Holder; **CEO, Mandeville Regional Hospital:** Alwyn Miller; **SMO, Mandeville Regional Hospital:** Dr. Everton McIntosh

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Chairman of the SRHA Board, Wayne Chen noted that while Florence Nightingale is recognized internationally for her contribution to the nursing profession, he is encouraging the recognition of Jamaican Mary Seacole, who has paved the path for excellence for Jamaican nurses and contributed to their demand internationally.

“This afternoon is especially poignant for me because of those of us who have stayed the course and gone to war in this pandemic. When I got the news of the first healthcare worker in our region who tested positive for COVID-19, tears came to my eyes and even now when I think about it and talk about it I still get emotional just thinking of the healthcare workers, the nurses especially, on the frontline every day, going to war for the people of this country” Mr. Chen said.

He noted that the negative reports of the bad experiences in the health sector overshadow the day to day good of the staff members, “who see it as just the ordinary day to day service that they provide to the people of this country. But what I see every day are acts of heroism that go unrecognized” the Board Chairman added.

Other speakers who lauded the nurses for their service were: President of the Enrolled Assistant Nurses Association, Esther Campbell; President of the Midwives Association, Asseta Edwards Hamilton; President of the Nursing Association of Jamaica, Patsy Edwards-Henry and Regional Director for the SRHA, Michael Bent.

Recently, the SRHA copped all awards at the Ministry of Health & Wellness' Rheumatic Fever Fifth Annual Review. Manchester received awards for highest educational sessions, highest number of training sessions, Parish Coordinator of the Year and the Early Bird Award, while St. Elizabeth received the award for the highest compliance rate. The SRHA Regional Office copped awards for the highest rheumatic fever coverage, highest number of rheumatic fever audits conducted and Regional Rheumatic Fever Coordinator of the Year.

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SRHA Regional Director, Michael Bent presents a token of appreciation to SRHA Supervisory Nurse Practitioner & Regional Rheumatic Fever Coordinator, Andrienne Sylvester at the recognition ceremony of nurses and midwives in the SRHA.

-30-

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