



## PRESS RELEASE

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**May 18, 2022**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

### Child & Adolescent Services Get Boost in Southern Jamaica

The Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) Mental Health Unit has procured diagnostic and play items, valued at a little less than J \$1 million dollars, which will introduce play therapy for children and adolescents to manage behavioural and psychological problems.

SRHA Regional Psychiatrist, Dr. Doreth Garvey Leslie explained that the items which include toys, television sets, educational and art & craft objects, will be used in the child guidance clinics to engage children and adolescents in Clarendon, St. Elizabeth and Manchester.

"We hope to introduce play therapy, which is a means of utilizing our childrens' natural abilities to help them to express their emotions and to help them solve problems. So, it is about their mental health. Children will not always understand what adults say to them or they may not always be able to express how they feel but it comes out in their natural abilities in play and so when we engage them through art or craft, building blocks or other play activities using a sandbox or dolls or various methods; it brings out the specific problems they may be experiencing at school, at home or in the community" Dr. Garvey Leslie said.

The Psychiatrist said these activities are not play without a purpose but will foster greater responsibility; anger management; greater self-respect and respect of others; alleviation of anxiety; development of social skills and encourage sharing.

SRHA Regional Director Michael Bent commended Regional Mental Health Supervisor, Karen Elliott for the initiative, adding that persons may view the items as insignificant; however, the benefits are great.

"This is a good investment when we look at the benefits to be derived. There is no good health without good mental health and these items will help to detect and alleviate some of the problems. I commend the team

(more)

**Chairman: Wayne Chen; Vice Chairman:** Michael Stern, **Board Members:** Lorraine Green Mason, Marcus Greenwood, Stafford Houghton, Winston Maragh, Dr. Lloyd Reynolds, Albert Williams, Omar Miller, Dave Powell, **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

for this initiative and encourage them to continue to improve the outcome and services we provide in this critical area of health" Mr. Bent said.

Child and adolescent clinics across Jamaica are staffed by psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses, psychologists, social workers and psychiatric nursing aides. The services can be accessed by referrals from schools, social services agencies, hospitals and private practitioners and through the court system. Persons can also walk in to the facilities for services.

The most common diagnoses for children and adolescents in Jamaica are: conduct disorder; attention deficit disorder; learning disorders and depression.

Picture 1



SRHA Mental Health Unit receives items valued at a little less than J \$1 million dollars, which will improve therapy for children and adolescents in Clarendon, St. Elizabeth and Manchester. Participating in the handover are: (left to right) SRHA Regional Director, Michael Bent; Regional Technical Director, Dr. Vitillius Holder; Regional Psychiatrist, Dr. Doreth Garvey Leslie; Regional Mental Health Supervisor, Karen Elliott and Psychiatric Nursing Aide, Stephen Roberts.

(more)

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Picture 2



Mental Health Nurse from Clarendon, Fay Tee Robinson (left); Regional Mental Health Supervisor, Karen Elliott (centre) and Regional Psychiatrist, Dr. Doreth Garvey Leslie are pictured here following the handover of items, valued at a little less than J \$1 million dollars, which will improve child therapy for children and adolescents in Clarendon, St. Elizabeth and Manchester.

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