



PRESS RELEASE

May 1, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Health Support Increases for Adolescents in St. Elizabeth

The St. Elizabeth Health Department (SEHD) is strengthening its support for adolescents in the parish through the revival of adolescent health clinics, for youths aged 10 to 19 years.

The adolescent health programme, was operational from as far back as 2013, through the Ministry of Health & Wellness Adolescent Standards and Criteria. Clinics became inactive due to the COVID-19 pandemic but the parish has been focusing on re-starting the clinics with the purpose of helping adolescents to manage their health and development.

Deputy Medical Officer of Health for the SEHD, Dr. Carol Hamilton explained that so far, clinics have been restarted at the Balaclava and Junction health centres with plans advanced for the resumption of the clinic at the Santa Cruz Health Centre shortly.

Services offered at the clinics include: sexual and reproductive health including HIV counselling and testing for youths 16 years and older, mental health screening and counselling, drug abuse counselling, nutritional counselling, oral health, medical check-up, counselling for interpersonal conflicts and vaccination. Dr. Hamilton added that recreational activities, assistance with homework and parental workshops are also part of the services being offered.

At the Balaclava Health Centre, clinics will be held every fourth Friday, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., while adolescents can go to the Junction Health Centre every fourth Wednesday from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

"The St. Elizabeth Health Department sees the need for adolescent health clinics as it seeks to assist parents and teachers with the holistic development of adolescents. We believe that this will have a further positive impact on society" Dr. Hamilton said.

"Our aim is to ensure that our adolescents are catered for. You know these are formative years of their lives and they have a lot of things
(more)

Chairman: Wayne Chen; Vice Chairman: Michael Stern, **Board Members:** Lorraine Green Mason, Marcus Greenwood, Stafford Haughton, 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

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coming at them at this age. They have different changes, psychological, mental health and physical changes so we as healthcare workers will assist them in adjusting to these changes. So, at the clinic, we will be providing a friendly environment" Dr. Hamilton noted.

Adolescence is a period characterised by rapid physical, cognitive and social changes, including sexual and reproductive maturation. Adolescents are generally healthy, but their risk-taking behaviours pose challenges to their health and development. Issues including sexual identity and dealing with one's sexuality, add to the dynamism of the period and cannot be overlooked by any service that provides for their needs.

Picture 1



Some of the students who participated in the re-launch ceremony of the adolescent health clinic at the Junction Health Centre in St. Elizabeth in April 2024.

(more)

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Picture 2

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Deputy Medical Officer of Health for the SEHD, Dr. Carol Hamilton.

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