



## PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

### **Mandeville Regional Hospital Performs First-Ever Colonoscopy**

The Mandeville Regional Hospital (MRH) in Manchester has performed its first-ever colonoscopy procedure, signaling a breakthrough in public healthcare for residents of Manchester and neighbouring parishes.

Colonoscopy is a procedure where a thin flexible tube, with a light and camera at the end, is inserted into the rectum and guided through the colon. This allows the lining of the colon to be examined in detail, take biopsies and perform medical measures where necessary.

Dr. Andrew Josephs, a surgical consultant at the MRH, trained in endoscopy, laparoscopy and minimally invasive procedures, explained that the hospital has not traditionally offered colonoscopy services, resulting in patients seeking alternative care from other major public hospitals, privately or overseas.

The hospital is now able to offer this procedure, following the generous donation of the colonoscopy equipment by the Food for the Poor and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints recently.

"We were able to get the system through a set of donors. So, there's Food for the Poor and there's the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, they were really the main donors for this system" Dr. Josephs explained.

He added that the introduction of colonoscopy services at the hospital is expected to improve early detection of colorectal cancer, the third most common cancer in Jamaica.

The surgical consultant pointed out that the system sets a new standard for medical technological infrastructure on the island.

"After a number of years, we are finally here, we have one of the most advanced system actually on the island, possibly I think within the Caribbean as well, it really is a state-of-the-art system," Josephs said.

(more)

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Since the service was introduced recently, MRH has completed two colonoscopies and one upper gastrointestinal gastroscopy, despite delays caused by hurricane-related setbacks.

Certification training for the service has now been completed, and the programme is expected to expand.

Josephs noted that once fully operational, the hospital aims to perform six to ten endoscopic procedures per day, with at least one dedicated day per week for colonoscopies and other endoscopic services. Plans are also in place to increase training opportunities for surgical residents.

Dr. Josephs stressed that colon cancer can be asymptomatic in its early stages and encouraged patients to maximize early screening.

“Essentially between age 45 to 50, everyone should have some form of colonic evaluation. What we advocate for, is doing what's called a faecal occult blood test or fit test, it's a stool-based test... if that comes back positive, then you definitely should move on to get something definitive like a colonoscopy.”

Addressing public hesitation surrounding the procedure, he offered a simple message: “It is better to know than not to know. It's not a painful procedure, there may be mild discomfort, but the other good thing is that, if your colonoscopy is normal, it's seven to ten years before you have to repeat.”

He urged the public to take advantage of the new service, encouraging them to get tested.

(more)

Picture 1



**Surgical Consultant Dr. Andrew Joseph's (right) guides General Surgeon, Dr. Karen Colley during the hospital's first colonoscopy procedure.**

(more)

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Picture 2



**The Olympus GI endoscopy system, Mandeville Regional Hospital's first colonoscopy machine.**

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