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Health Care Boosted in St. Elizabeth; Numbers Accessing Services Increase at Centre of Excellence

The Ministry of Health developed the Centres of Excellence as part of its thrust to enhance the provision of primary health care across the island and since the opening of the first Centre in 2013; the Santa Cruz Centre of Excellence has seen a significant increase in the number of persons accessing its services.

A report from the St. Elizabeth Health Department from January 2013 until June 2015 shows a significant move in persons accessing Dental Care which accounts for a 98 percent increase. Public Health Nurse at the Centre of Excellence, Sasha Forbes indicated that an upgrade to the dental clinic and its service offerings have contributed to the increase.

Other areas of service which showed a substantial increase within the same period includes Curative Care with an increase of 67 percent; Post-natal services with a 37 percent growth fol-

lowed by Child Health which increased by 27 percent. A twenty percent increase was attributed to Antenatal services while an overall increase of 66 percent was recorded.

Nurse Forbes pointed out that in addition to the growth of the town of Santa Cruz, persons have seen the Santa Cruz Centre of Excellence as a mini-hospital since its upgrade in 2013.

"We now have new equipment, additional staff and new buildings. These have contributed to the increase. We now have an upgraded laboratory which has contributed largely to persons accessing lab services. Before referrals were sent to the Black River Hospital and the Mandeville Regional Hospital. The dental clinic has been upgraded and Maternal and Child Health now have a building of its own with new equipment" she explained.

Additionally the Centre of Excellence boasts more examination rooms and also an increase in doctors. Other areas which have seen an upgrading include diagnostic and ultra sound services, sickle cell testing, blood chemistry, cholesterol and blood count services and glucose testing. The Centre of Excellence has also been offering curative services daily.

For Parish Manager of the St. Elizabeth Services, Sean Brissett, the expectations from the residents have been very high and "persons have been referring to the Centre as a hospital with mothers even coming to deliver babies."

He added that the Centre of Excellence and its improved offerings have been very symbolic and important to the town of Santa Cruz.

With the Southern Regional Health Authority placing emphasis on good customer service,

Nurse Forbes noted that the staff has been working towards the mandate of treating clients and fellow staff members with respect. She noted that while there is always room for improvement, this is the general consensus at the staff and managerial levels.



A section of the upgraded dental clinic.



Sections of the Santa Cruz Centre of Excellence.

Wellness Bytes: "Importance of Drinking Water"

We often hear that water is life but how serious are we about drinking safe water. See below a few tips about the importance of drinking more water.

- **Increases Energy & Relieves Fatigue**

Since your brain is mostly water, drinking it helps you think, focus and concentrate better and be more

alert.

- **Promotes Weight Loss**

Removes by-products of fat.

- **Flushes Out Toxins**

Gets rid of waste through sweat and urination which reduces the risk of kidney stones and urinary tract infections.

- **Improves Skin Complexion**

Moisturizes your skin, keeps it fresh, soft, glowing and smooth. Gets rid of wrinkles.

- **Natural Headache Remedy**

Helps relieve and prevent headaches which are commonly caused by dehydration.



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Authority**
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- **Maintains Regularity**

Aids in digestion as water is essential to digest your food and prevents constipation

- **Puts You in a Good Mood**

When the body is functioning at its best, you will feel great.

In the News: Southern Regional Health Authority

Southern Region Taps Into Revolutionary Medical Education Initiative "Project ECHO"

As the Ministry of Health continues to improve the health care system through innovative and effective initiatives, the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) has tapped into a revolutionary health care idea that empowers clinicians in rural areas to provide better health care to citizens.

Project ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) is a col-

laborative model of medical education and care management that makes specialized medical knowledge accessible wherever it is needed to save and improve people's lives. It puts local clinicians together with a specialist or specialist teams in weekly virtual clinics for training and discussion.

Dr. Bradley Edwards, Senior Medical Officer at the May Pen Hospital in Clarendon and flag-bearer of the programme

in Jamaica explained that the ECHO model dramatically increases access to specialty treatment in rural and underserved areas by providing clinicians with the knowledge and support they need to manage patients with varying conditions. Some of these conditions have included hepatitis C, rheumatoid arthritis, chronic pain, and behavioral health disorders among many others.

"The Project which provides online training

focuses on specialist training for non-specialists in areas where there are inadequate specialists. It does this by engaging clinicians in a continuous learning system and partnering them with specialist mentors. Although Project ECHO makes use of telecommunications technology, it is different from telemedicine as telemedicine brings the specialist to the patient whereas an ECHO Clinic brings the specialist to the

"Project ECHO" cont'd

caregivers" Dr. Edwards added.

For Regional Director of the SRHA, Michael Bent, the benefits of Project ECHO are extensive as it improves outcomes, reduce costs and provides evidence-based, best practice guidance from specialists to clinicians.

"I am pleased that such a project is being piloted in the region as it has definitely been assisting with improving health care in the region" Mr. Bent noted.

Project ECHO was introduced to Jamaica during an Advancements in Medicine conference in 2012 at the May Pen Hospital by the Project's Director, Dr. Sanjeev Arora from the University of New Mexico. With the support of the Ministry of Health, the programme is being piloted in the southern region with the objective of being rolled out across the island.

Clinicians in the southern region currently participate in weekly training clinics

facilitated by specialist doctors from the University Hospital of the West Indies and Consultants from the May Pen Hospital.

The curriculum which will run for one year covers various topics including: Renal Failure Prevention, Management of Haematuria, Evaluation of Secondary Hypertension, Evaluation and Management of Pre-Renal Failure, Cardiovascular Disease Management and Chronic Kidney Disease and Peritoneal

Dialysis Initiation and Complication.

A team from the southern region journeyed to New Mexico to undergo training in January of this year.

Left:

A Renal Failure Prevention Clinic in session. Clinicians from the southern region interact with specialists from New Mexico and the University Hospital of the West Indies.

Below:

Equipment used to connect to the virtual Clinic on a weekly basis.



Health Ministry's Corner:

Persons Urged to Treat Water Before Consuming in Light of the Current Drought

In light of the continuing drought, Director, Health Promotion and Protection, Dr. Sonia Copeland is urging persons to ensure that they treat water before use especially water that is collected from untreated sources such as rivers, streams and other water ways.

“At this time of drought several persons are collecting and storing water for domestic use from various sources. Persons are therefore advised to ensure that they treat their water before use as it may not be

safe for consumption,” Dr. Copeland said.

Ways to make water safe include adding bleach and boiling. Water should be at a boil for at least one minute before removing it from the fire. Cover it and let it cool before using.

In terms of adding bleach, Dr. Copeland says the amount depends on the quantity of water.

“For one litre or one quart of water, two drops of bleach should be added; For twenty

litres or five gallons, we recommend half of a teaspoon of bleach and for 170 litres or 45 gallons, 4 and half teaspoons of bleach should be added to the water. Ensure that you mix well and leave it for 30 minutes before consuming,” she said.

Water should be treated before drinking or making drinks, washing fruits and vegetables, making ice, preparing food and washing dishes and utensils.



the talent corner

*Uninvited He Comes To Take
That Which He Claims To Be His Own
Leaving Life's Sorrow's In His Wake
He Travel's To The Dark Unknown*

*He Comes Unseen And Comes Unheard
By A Path That Is So Hard To Trace
With Steel Cold Eyes To Gird
And Stare Life In The Face*

*“Death” : Verol Ebanks
Assistant Internal Auditor, SRHA
(Written as a teenager)*

*There's Never A Day He'll Fail To Visit
Fearful Foes, Never a Friend
Who Pay Their Debts Though None Did Credit
Life From Him Who Is It's End*

*Though Sometimes We May Not Understand
Yet God's Purpose Is Well Defined
For Life May Not Turn Out As We've Planned
But Must Be As He Designed*



HR And You:

“Back to School Health Tips”

As parents approach this time of the year, it can be a strenuous period with all the preparations to be made for back to school. See below a few tips and reminders to give your child a healthy start to the school year.

1. Ensure that a complete medical examination is done.

Before your child starts the new school year, make sure that a complete medical examination is done to determine the child's health status.

2. Ensure that your child is fully immunized.

Making sure that children of all ages are fully vaccinated is one of the most important things parents can do to ensure their children's long-term health, as well as the health of friends, classmates and others in the community.

3. Plan healthy breakfasts and lunches.

As you prepare to send your children back to school, remember that nutrition is an important factor in academic performance. Studies have shown that children who eat healthful, balanced breakfasts and lunches are more alert throughout the school day and earn higher grades than those who have an unhealthy diet.

4. Food Safety

Parents are reminded to adhere to food safety practices when preparing any type of food. These include:

Washing of hands with warm water and soap for at least twenty seconds before preparing food.

Cooking of foods that require cooking to an appropriate temperature to prevent loss of nutrients.

Refrigerating foods that need refrigeration at the required temperature before preparation

Preparing food on a clean surface to prevent food-borne illnesses

Checking of canned food labels to determine if they are safe for your children to eat

5. Give your child plenty of water to drink.

Remember, water is the best drink for kids and even adults. Soda, sweet teas, fruit drinks and sports drinks contain too much sugar, and have been linked to overweight and obesity.

6. Ensure that your child eats the right food.

This requires eating from the five Caribbean food groups which includes proteins and fats, carbohydrate, vitamins, minerals, legumes and beans in moderate proportions, which helps your child to function effectively in school.

7. Promote exercise as part of your child's daily routine.

Exercise enhances the brain's metabolism, and reduces obesity, which can lead to heart disease. Studies have shown that children, who exercise a lot, have better memory retention, which helps in their overall performance in school.

8. Helping to prevent harmful diseases.

Children should be taught to wash their hands for at least 30 seconds before and after using the bathroom, to prevent communicable diseases.

Children should also be taught to wash their hands for at least 30 seconds before handling any type of food to prevent against bacteria, germs and other parasites.

Credit: Jamaica Information Service

Staff Highlight

Crazy Tie Day at Southern Regional Health Authority

Recently the Projects Department hosted a 'Craazy Tie Day' which pulled out the creative streaks in many persons. If you missed the crazy day, see below photographic highlights.



A Day in the Life of:

Dalton Myrie
"Mr. Fix It"

Dalton Myrie
Systems
Administrator
SRHA



1. How long have you been working with the Ministry of Health/southern region?

A little over two years.

2. What is your position at the SRHA?

Systems Administrator

3. What inspired you to choose your profession?

I have always been fascinated with electronics from childhood but when I was introduced to the computer system in high school, my interest peaked instantly after seeing the magical things it was able to do. I knew from there that this was the path that I will be pursuing.

4. If you did not choose your present profession, what else would it be?

Architect

5. What is your biggest achievement to date?

Plan and Implement Networks infrastructure for Data and/or Private Bank Exchange (PBX) and/or Closed Circuit (CCTV) systems for several organizations.

6. Are you driven by any philosophy?

"I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

7. Who or what inspires you to do your best?

My mother Rosalee Myrie - She has always been a tower of strength for me throughout my entire life. She always encourages me to do my best in whatever I set out to do and have a

meaningful relationship with my Creator and because of this I strive to make her proud and happy in all my endeavors.

8. Who is Dalton Myrie, describe him in five words.

Helpful, Dedicated, Reserved, Consistent and Genuine

9. What is the most important life lesson you have learnt?

Devotion, Consistency and with the help of God will allow you to achieve any task you set out to.

10. What is your favourite hobby?

Badminton and Computer Games

11. What brightens your day?

To know that I gave someone the opportunity to smile and be happy.

12. Do you have a talent, if yes, what is it?

Yes, singing

13. Do you have any professional advice for fellow colleagues?

In order to protect your computer system and your organization, be aware of unusual pop ups and files; they might be exploits used to gain access to sensitive information.



Please submit your articles and feedback to:

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Deadline: August 31, 2015