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Mandeville Hospital Performs First Scar-free Vaginal Surgery in Jamaica



Dr. Alexis Peters (left), Resident at Southern California, and Associate Professor of Surgery at the University of Southern California, Dr. Sharon Shiraga (right), guide Junior Resident at the MRH, Dr. Keem McLaughlin (centre), during a laparoscopic procedure at the hospital June 10, 2026.

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In the News: Southern Regional Health Authority

Mandeville Hospital Performs First Scar-free Vaginal Surgery in Jamaica



Medical professionals observe the first VNOTES (Vaginal Natural Orifice Transluminal Endoscopic Surgery) procedure in Jamaica at Mandeville Regional Hospital on June 10, 2026.

The Mandeville Regional Hospital (MRH) in Manchester has become the first hospital in Jamaica to perform a scar-free minimally invasive vaginal surgery known as Vaginal Natural Orifice Transluminal Endoscopic Surgery (vNOTES).

The groundbreaking procedure, which allows surgeons to operate through the vaginal canal using specialised instruments and a camera, eliminates the need for abdominal incisions and visible scarring.

The milestone was achieved during a three-day surgical mission held from June 9 to 11, when local doctors partnered with specialist surgeons from the Jamaica Awareness Association of California (JAAC). The annual mission aims to strengthen Jamaica's capacity in advanced laparoscopic and en-

doscopic surgery.

Senior Resident in the Department of Surgery at MRH, Dr Ashok Kotagiri, said the teams completed about 21 advanced procedures during the mission.

“These included advanced laparoscopic hernia repairs using techniques such as Transabdominal Preperitoneal, Totally Extraperitoneal and Intraperitoneal Onlay Mesh, laparoscopic gallbladder removal, and advanced laparoscopic gynaecological procedures, including hysterectomies, bilateral salpingectomies and ovarian cyst surgeries using the vNOTES approach,” he explained.

Kotagiri noted that the procedures performed require a higher level of expertise than routine surgeries.

“The type of surgeries we are doing, they are not the simple everyday surgeries. These are advanced surgeries. I am glad that our gynaecologists at MRH are the first team to perform this advanced surgery in Jamaica. Even in the United States and Europe, not all gynaecologists have the skills to perform this advanced laparoscopic gynaecological surgery,” he said.

Associate Professor of Surgery at the University of Southern California and JAAC volunteer physician, Dr Sharon Shiraga, said the mission places a strong emphasis on training local medical teams.

“We’re here at Mandeville Hospital helping the residents and doctors to enhance their laparoscopy surgery by doing hernia surgeries, gallbladder surgeries and any other advanced surgeries of laparoscopy they would like to have,” she said.

Senior Resident in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at MRH, Dr Toshikah Wheatley-Williams, described the introduction of vNOTES as a “game changer” for patients, noting that the minimally invasive procedure allows women to return to their daily activities more quickly.

The JAAC team also donated laparoscopic and other surgical supplies valued at approximately J\$5 million to support patient care and expand access to advanced procedures.

Source: The Jamaica Gleaner

In the News: Southern Regional Health Authority

Senior Citizen's leg Saved Through Complex Bypass Surgery at Mandeville Regional Hospital



From Left Dr Denzel Clarke, Medical Officer at the MRH; Dr Varunesh Chand, MRH Consultant General Surgeon; patient, Mr. Edwin Rowe; Dr. Sanneta Myrie, Surgery Resident former Miss Jamaica World 2015, and Dr Joel Sugrim, MRH Medical Officer share a photo opportunity. Mr. Rowe is seen ambulating with the aid of crutches and a prosthesis one week after surgery.

The Mandeville Regional Hospital (MRH) in Manchester recently successfully performed a complex bypass procedure that saved a patient's only remaining lower limb from amputation.

Dr. Varunesh Chand, Consultant General Surgeon at the MRH, explained that 72 year-old, Edwin Rowe was admitted to the hospital in April 2026 with chronic limb threatening ischemia, manifesting as gangrene to his fourth toe. This is a condition where the tissue dies due to inadequate blood supply.

His right leg was at elevated risk for amputation due to peripheral arterial disease with severely reduced blood flow to the leg, brought on by long term diabetes, hypertension and a past history of smoking.

"Four years earlier, Mr. Rowe underwent a left below-knee amputation due to infectious complications related to diabetes. Despite this setback, he remained functional and independent. With his right leg now solely responsible for mobility and balance, it was considered his 'precious limb,' and its loss would result in permanent wheelchair dependence" Dr. Chand added.

"Once admitted a CT scan revealed severe arterial blockages involving the main artery in the thigh and continuing into the major arteries of the lower leg and foot. Only a small segment of a healthy artery below the ankle remained usable for bypass surgery. Endovascular stenting was not an option for him" the general surgeon pointed out.

The surgical team proceeded with an inframalleolar bypass, a specialized procedure used to redirect blood flow to the foot by bypassing severely blocked arteries. To restore circulation to the foot, a portion of the patient's saphenous vein was harvested and then used as a bypass graft.

Post-operative scans showed more than a 50 percent improvement in blood flow to the foot and Mr. Rowe made a smooth recovery and was later discharged.

With blood flow restored, the immediate threat of losing the limb was removed, giving Mr. Rowe the opportunity to maintain his mobility, independence, and quality of life.

The successful procedure was performed on May 20, 2026.

Source: The Southern Regional Health Authority

In the News: Southern Regional Health Authority

Rotary Club Donates J\$3M Paediatric Equipment to Black River Hospital



Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health and Wellness, Errol Greene (left), shakes hands with President of the Rotary Club of St. Andrew North, Pierpont Wilson, during the handover of paediatric medical equipment valued \$3 million. The donation, made by the Club to the Black River Hospital in St. Elizabeth, was officially presented to the SRHA during a ceremony. Looking on is SRHA Regional Director, Michael Bent.

The Black River Hospital in St. Elizabeth has received paediatric medical equipment valued \$3 million from the Rotary Club of St. Andrew North.

The donation forms part of the Club's Hurricane Melissa recovery and healthcare support initiatives.

Items handed over include an infant incubator, a phototherapy lamp, and two infusion pumps.

These were officially presented to the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) during a ceremony held on Friday (June 5) at Jamaica National's (JN) Corporate Offices in Kingston.

In his address at the ceremony, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health and

Wellness, Errol Greene, emphasised that through their generous gesture, the Rotary Club has made a lasting investment in both the health and future of the nation's children.

"The donation is more than a collection of medical devices. It represents hope, compassion, and steadfast commitment for the wellbeing of Jamaica's children. The paediatric equipment being presented to SRHA and the Black River Hospital will strengthen our ability to provide quality care, improve patient outcomes and support our healthcare teams in delivering timely and effective treatment to our young patients," he added.

Mr. Greene stressed that recovery extends beyond rebuilding infrastructure, under-

scoring that it is also about restoring confidence, strengthening resilience, and ensuring the most vulnerable citizens continue to receive care and support.

Meanwhile, Rotary Club President, Pierpont Wilson, remarked that in the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa, many communities across Jamaica were left grappling with tremendous challenges.

He noted that among the facilities affected was the Black River Hospital, which sustained significant losses at a time when access to quality healthcare was needed more than ever.

"These are not merely pieces of equipment. They represent hope for newborns, support for parents during some of the most vulnerable moments of their lives, improved care, better health outcomes, and a stronger health care system for the people of St. Elizabeth and the surrounding communities," Mr. Wilson said.

Notably, Mr. Wilson stated that through its fundraising efforts, the Club was able to support several meaningful recovery projects, which he emphasised will have a lasting impact on the lives of those affected.

Partners in the initiative included the Ministry of Health, KR Method, the APEX Foundation, and United Way of Jamaica.

Source: Jamaica Information Service

Facilities on the Move

Clarendon Health Department Encourages Children to say no to Tobacco

On Wednesday, June 3, 2026, the Clarendon Health Department hosted a World No Tobacco Day competition at the Chapelton Library, engaging primary and high school students through a banner competition, presentations and other educational activities focused on the dangers of tobacco and nicotine use.

Students showcased their creativity and knowledge while learning about the harmful effects of tobacco and nicotine addiction and promoting healthier choices among young people.

The event was held under the theme: “Unmasking the Appeal: Countering Nicotine and Tobacco Addiction.”



Facilities on the Move

Students Embrace Healthy Living at Caribbean Nutrition Day Celebration in Clarendon

On Thursday, June 11, 2026, the Clarendon Health Department commemorated Caribbean Nutrition Day at the Beulah All Age School in the parish with a vibrant day of learning and creativity under the theme “Healthy Eating, Active Living.”

Students showcased their talents through hat, essay, poster and jingle competitions, while participants also benefited from engaging education sessions, physical activity exercises and live food demonstrations promoting nutritious and economical choices and healthy lifestyles.

The event was also supported by several stakeholders such as the Social Development Commission, Rural Agricultural Development Authority, Clarendon 4-H Club and HEART/ NSTA Trust.



Facilities on the Move

Manchester Health Department Hosts Caribbean Nutrition Day Capacity-Building Workshop

In commemoration of Caribbean Nutrition Day, observed annually on June 1, the Manchester Health Department hosted its capacity-building workshop at the Mandeville Parish Church Hall, promoting healthy eating, active living and the use of local foods to support healthier lifestyles.

The workshop encouraged participants to share the message of better nutrition within their workplaces, churches and communities, helping to promote healthier choices beyond the day's activities.

Please see the video for details.



Facilities on the Move

Percy Junor Hospital Celebrates 81 Years of Healthcare Excellence

On Friday, 26 June 2026, Percy Junor Hospital marked its 81st anniversary under the theme, “Honouring 81 Years of Healthcare Excellence and Community Participation.”

The celebration featured a Customer Appreciation Day, health exhibits, and a special ceremony with members of the Junor family. We were honoured to welcome Beverley Junor Levy, daughter of the late Percival Junor, founder of Percy Junor Hospital, along with her daughter, Suzanne Levy Louis, and her grandnephew, Peter Junor, as they joined us in commemorating this important milestone.

We also recognised our dedicated staff for their unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional care and thank our community for their continued support throughout the years. Here’s to 81 years of service, compassion and excellence—and many more to come!



Facilities on the Move

SRHA Hosts Successful World Food Safety Day Exposition

The Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) hosted a successful World Food Safety Day Expo at the Cecil Charlton Park on Friday, June 5 under the theme, “From Burden to Solutions – Safe Food Everywhere.”

The event brought together stakeholders, students, food handlers and members of the community, raising awareness about the importance of food safety and the role it plays in protecting public health.



Facilities on the Move

Purpose and Commitment to Care Strengthened at Board & Senior Manager's Retreat

The Southern Regional Health Authority hosted its three-day retreat for board members, hospital management committee chairpersons and senior management teams, under the theme “Dedicated to Quality: Committed to Care”.

Participants were exposed to dialogue and presentations on critical areas of service delivery; human resource management; audit and risk management; public procurement; corporate governance; financial discipline, among others.

The sessions strengthened the participants knowledge, judgment and effectiveness as leaders, while reinforcing purpose and commitment to care.



Facilities on the Move

St. Elizabeth Health Department Celebrates Caribbean Nutrition Day

The St. Elizabeth Health Department observed Caribbean Nutrition Day in Santa Cruz, on Tuesday, June 2, 2026, with a series of engaging activities aimed at promoting healthier lifestyles.

Participants benefited from live food demonstrations, practical tips on food serving sizes, nutrition education, physical activity sessions, and healthy recipe ideas designed to support better eating habits.

The event was held under the theme “Healthy Eating, Active Living.”



Facilities on the Move

CARE Fund Information Sessions Equip Community Organisations in Manchester and Clarendon

On Friday, June 19, 2026, and Tuesday June 23, 2026, community-based organisations from across Manchester and May Pen respectively, gathered at the Golf View Hotel in Mandeville, Manchester and the St. Thomas More Catholic Church Preparatory School Auditorium in May Pen, Clarendon for the CARE Fund Information Session hosted by the Ministry of Health & Wellness.

Participants learned how the CARE Fund supports community-led projects through grant funding, helping to strengthen health, wellness and development initiatives across Jamaica. The sessions also provided guidance on the application process, proposal development and the fund’s 10 priority areas.



Facilities on the Move

SEHD & Jamaica Constabulary Force Partners to Strengthen Mental Health Response

The St. Elizabeth Health Department, in collaboration with the Jamaica Constabulary Force, hosted a mental health training session for police officers and healthcare professionals on Tuesday, June 23, 2026.

The session equipped first responders with practical knowledge to better support persons experiencing mental health crises, while strengthening collaboration between the health sector and law enforcement. This was the second training of its kind in the parish, following the first session in March 2025.

Together, we're fostering safer communities through education, partnership and compassionate care.



Facilities on the Move

HPV Testing Pilot Programme Launched in Manchester and Clarendon

The Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) has expanded access to cervical cancer screening through its Pilot HPV Testing Programme with the launch of two testing sites in the southern region.

The programme was officially launched at the Mandeville Comprehensive Health Centre on Tuesday, June 23, 2026, marking the first HPV testing site in the southern region. A second site was officially launched at the Kellits Health Centre in Clarendon on Monday, June 29, 2026, further increasing access to advanced cervical cancer screening services.

The initiative is designed to detect high-risk Human Papillomavirus (HPV) early, supporting the prevention of cervical cancer through timely diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up care.

HPV testing is available at:

- Mandeville Comprehensive Health Centre:** Every second Thursday.
- Kellits Health Centre:** Every 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Thursday for women aged 30–64 years.



Staff Highlight



Michael Gardener

Male Attendant
Percy Junor Hospital, Manchester

“Michael Gardener: A Champion of Patient Care”



For the past five years, Michael Gardener has been a familiar and dependable presence at Percy Junor Hospital, where he serves as a Male Attendant.

Whether assisting patients with limited mobility, transporting patients between hospitals, delivering essential items across departments, or ensuring wheelchairs and stretchers are cleaned and sanitized, Michael takes pride in making a difference through the work he does every day.

Working within the Southern Regional Health Authority has been a rewarding learning experience that has strengthened his commitment to patient care and teamwork.

Guided by the words of Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," Michael approaches every responsibility with determination, believing that giving his best is always worth the effort.

His dedication was recognized when he received a plaque for Excellent Performance after earning a perfect PMAS score of 100 percent for the 2024/2025 appraisal period, an achievement he considers the highlight of his professional career.

Outside of work, Michael's greatest motivation is his son, whose growth inspires him to continue striving for excellence.

He describes himself as caring, motivational, optimistic, enthusiastic, and hard-working; qualities that are reflected both in his work and in his personal life. On his days off, you're most likely to find him helping his spouse with household chores.

Growing up, Michael dreamed of becoming a firefighter, a goal that still inspires him today. Looking ahead, he hopes to become either a psychiatric nurse or a firefighter, continuing his passion for helping others.

His advice to fellow colleagues is simple but meaningful: "Always be punctual, customer-friendly, and hard-working."

When asked about his hopes for Jamaica, Michael wishes for a future with less violence, more employment opportunities, and better salaries for all. His outlook reflects the same optimism that guides both his career and his life: no matter how difficult things become, never give up.

DEPARTMENT
Spotlight

**Percy Junor Hospital's
Maintenance Team
“Maintains” and “Operates”
In Excellence**



**PERCY JUNOR OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE
DEPARTMENT TEAM MEMBERS**

From left to right: Granil Blidgen (Artisan), Winston Jones (Maintenance Supervisor), Orlando Stedford (Artisan) and Kimani Gordon (Artisan).

**Functions of the Operations and Maintenance
Department**

The Operations and Maintenance Department is responsible for carrying out a variety of maintenance tasks, including plumbing, electrical work, welding, and other general repairs to help keep the facilities running smoothly.

We believe that prevention is better than repair. By carrying out regular inspections and addressing issues early, we help reduce downtime, extend the life of equipment, and provide a safe and comfortable environment for everyone.

Staff Highlight

Football Fever Takes Over SRHA's Regional Office

Jerseys on. Team spirit activated!

On, Friday, June 19, 2026, the Southern Regional Health Authority team proudly sported their favourite football jersey in celebration of Jersey Day: World Cup Edition!

With football fever in the air, football has a way of bringing us together.



Staff Highlight

A Royal Achievement: Congratulations, Dr. Melissa Flinch!

Congratulations to Dr. Melissa Flinch of the Manchester Health Department on being crowned Miss Manchester Festival Queen 2026.

Your Southern Regional Health Authority family is proud of you and wishes you continued success.





HR And You:

“Interim Corner”



INTERIM CORNER

EXAMPLE OF HOW THE INTERIM EVALUATION SHOULD BE COMPLETED

Once an employee is “off track”, a reason is required and the agreed way forward. Below is an example:

SECTION A – QUANTIFIABLE OUTPUTS

Related Major Tasks	On Track	Not on Track	Barriers/Constraints	Action agreed or other comment
Update Complete PMAS related assessments for supervisors	☒	☐		
Prepare and submit reports	☒	☐	Reports submitted after the agreed deadline each month	Reports will be completed 2 days before the deadline and scheduled to send.
Attend meetings and other fora	☒	☐		

HRM&D Unit



Infohub



PR NAVIGATOR



Improving Special Events

Events vary so they call for a variety of treatment. Below are general approaches which may be applied to most events. This is particularly important when the Minister or State Minister in the Ministry of Health & Wellness will be involved.



There should be a main person responsible for overall planning of the event.



A support team should then be identified.



A theme for the event should be considered. It helps to create a story that will link all aspects of the event and give it a shape or personality.



Define the purpose of the event.



Carry out a site visit of the venue. This will involve ensuring that the space is appropriate.



Fix a date for the issuing of invitations, and in particular the invitation to the guest or keynote speaker. At least three weeks prior notice is considered necessary.



Establish deadlines and responsibilities (from members of your team) for the various components of the event.



Use a checklist to identify each task, responsibility and to update the progress of the planning for the event.



Have regular meetings to ensure that all assignments are being



PR NAVIGATOR



Improving Special Events



A follow-up meeting after the event will allow for evaluation and the identification of errors which may be avoided in the future.

PLEASE NOTE

Kindly engage the public relations team early, particularly when a minister will be involved, to ensure correct procedures and protocols are followed.

The team will assist with finalizing dates for the ministers, design invitations and programmes, invite media where necessary, provide internal media coverage, assist with event set-up and seating arrangements, provide information brief for ministers, etcetera.

N.B. Programmes should be as concise as possible. Not everyone in leadership has to speak at an event. Limit greetings/remarks to two to three persons.

Please contact the PR team for other recommendations.

Wellness Bytes

“Suicide Prevention Support”



Health & Wellness

You are not alone
in your struggle
with Mental Illness



Call the Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Helpline:
888 NEW LIFE (639-5433)

The Culinary Corner

Oven “Fried” Chicken and Quinoa “Rice” and Peas

Ingredients

- 1 5lb chicken, cut up; breasts removed and reserved
- 1 tablespoon chicken seasoning
- 2 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup whole milk
- 2 ½ cups seasoned panko breadcrumbs
- ½ cup plain seasoned breadcrumbs
- 1 ½ cups plain flour
- ½ cup olive oil or canola oil
- Olive oil cooking spray
- Ingredients: Quinoa
- 1 cup red kidney beans
- 5 cloves garlic
- 4 cups water
- 2 cups coconut milk
- 3 scallions, diced finely
- ½ small yellow onion, diced finely
- 5-7 thyme sprigs
- 6 allspice berries
- 1 maggi bouillon cube
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 whole green scotch bonnet pepper
- 1 cup quinoa

Method

Steps for chicken:

- Cut up and clean chicken to yield 10 pieces with the breasts removed. You may use legs and thighs as well if this is easier. Pat dry and season chicken with chicken seasoning, garlic powder, onion powder, black pepper and paprika.
- Preheat the oven to 390 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Prep a baking tray by spraying the surface with olive oil cooking spray. Set the tray aside.
- In a separate bowl, whisk eggs and milk to create an egg wash and set aside. In another bowl add 1 ½ cups plain flour and set aside. In another medium bowl, combine panko breadcrumbs, plain breadcrumbs and oil. Whisk together well until the breadcrumbs are fully coated in the oil. Your FEB station is now ready!
- Dip chicken into the plain flour first. Transfer the chicken to the egg wash and drain the excess before adding finally to the breadcrumb mixture. Be sure to fully coat all sides of the chicken into the breadcrumbs. Press the breadcrumbs into the skin to make sure it will stick and stay.
- Place each piece of chicken on the prepared baking tray. Give chicken a final spray with olive oil cooking spray. Bake for 45-50 minutes until golden and crispy.

Steps for Rice:

- Rinse kidney beans and place in 3 cups of water with garlic cloves in a medium pot. Cook over high heat until the beans rise to the top of the pot, about 10 minutes. Use an additional cup of cold water to “sink” the risen beans to the bottom of the pot that they may cook evenly.
- Beans should fully cook in about 35-40 minutes. Test the doneness by pressing the beans with a fork. You may need to add more water during the cooking of the beans. Watch them closely and add more water as needed. Add a cup of water at a time. You may cook the beans ahead of time or use already cooked canned beans.
- Once the beans are cooked, add coconut milk, scallions, thyme, onion, all spice, salt, scotch bonnet, bouillon and black pepper. Bring the milk to a boil over high heat.
- Once the milk comes to a boil, add rinsed quinoa and reduce to medium heat. Cook the quinoa until the water has completely evaporated from the pot. Reduce the heat to low heat and allow the quino to continue cooking



SUBMIT AN ARTICLE

We welcome your input.

Please submit your articles and feedback for the July edition to:

The Corporate Communications & Public Relations Branch

Email: latoya.laylor@srha.gov.jm

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The Lighter Side

