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May Pen Hospital Performs First Historic Surgery on Patient Stabbed in the Heart



Members of the multidisciplinary medical team at May Pen Hospital who successfully performed the facility's first life-saving surgery on a patient with a stab wound to the heart (left to right) Dr. Jevonne McIntosh, Medical Officer in the Anesthesiology Department; Dr. Amoy Ellis, Medical Officer in the A&E Department, Dr. Natoya Hall-Okori, Acting Consultant in the A&E Department; Dr. Andrea Johnson, A&E Consultant and Dr. O'Rane Thomas, Senior Registrar in General Surgery.

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In the News: Southern Regional Health Authority

May Pen Hospital Performs First Historic Surgery on Patient Stabbed in the Heart

In a historic first for May Pen Hospital (MPH), a multidisciplinary medical team successfully saved the life of a patient who arrived at the facility with a stab wound to the heart, marking a ground-breaking milestone in the hospital's growing capacity to manage complex trauma cases.

Dr. Natoya Hall-Okori, Acting Consultant in the A & E Department, said the severity of the patient's condition was determined within moments of arrival.

“So basically, a patient came in the department with a stab wound to the heart. This was identified within five minutes of presentation that the patient had what is called cardiac tamponade (when blood collects around the heart, placing pressure on it and preventing it from pumping). We were able to perform pericardiocentesis (draining excess fluid buildup from around the heart). We had a rapid ER (Emergency Room) to OR (Operating Room) coordination with anaesthesiology and general surgery. The patient had open heart surgery, repair of the cardiac injury, and later survived. Subsequently the patient went into cardiac rest, what we would say died and we resuscitated” she explained.

Dr. O’Rane Thomas, Senior Registrar in General Surgery at the MPH, said the team discovered significant damage to the heart during the procedure.

“When the patient came to the operating room, we opened the chest and we found that single stab wound to the heart. It was in the left atrium. We were able to compress that area and then apply a clamp to isolate it and repair it using sutures (stitches),” Dr. Thomas said.

Following the surgery, the patient recovered steadily. After continued monitoring and treatment, the patient was discharged and later returned for follow-up evaluations, which confirmed a full recovery.



Members of the multi-disciplinary medical team at May Pen Hospital (MPH) who successfully performed the facility's first life-saving surgery on a patient with a stab wound to the heart, share a photo opportunity with SRHA Regional Technical Director, Dr. Vitillius Holder (left), CEO of the hospital, Mrs. Eugena Clarke-James (4th left) and Ms. Annette Lawson, MPH Chief Medical Technologist (second right-also a member of the life-saving team).

Dr. Hall- Okori noted that the case reflects May Pen Hospital's commitment to continuous professional development, training, and establishing protocols for severe trauma cases.

“We have the team. You know, they said, write the vision; the Southern Regional Health Authority sent us out to the University Hospital of the West Indies and we were trained and we came back home, and we're bringing back what we learned. And we are very hopeful that in the end, MPH will be one of the best hospitals here in the Southern Regional Health Authority and Jamaica, the Caribbean. We're very hopeful and expect more of this to come” Dr. Hall said.

The case was examined during a “Coordinated Care in Penetrative Cardiac Trauma seminar held at the hospital on Thursday, March 12, 2026.

The presentation highlighted the rapid response and collaboration among the departments of accident & emergency, surgery, anaesthesiology, nursing and laboratory, which ultimately led to the patient's survival.

Credit: The Southern Regional Health Authority

In the News: Southern Regional Health Authority

Large Turnout for Free Kidney Screenings at Mandeville Health Fair



Scores of people take advantage of free health checks during activities at the health fair in Manchester.

Scores of people turned out for free kidney screening tests at a health fair hosted by the Mandeville Regional Hospital (MRH) Renal Department, as part of activities marking World Kidney Week. The event, held on Wednesday March 11, 2026, offered a range of services including blood pressure and blood sugar checks, urine testing, eye examinations and HIV testing.

Medical professionals were on hand to provide guidance on kidney health and disease prevention. Nurse Manager at the MRH Renal Unit, Mrs. Marika Davis -Miller, said the screening initiative is aimed at helping persons detect potential kidney problems early. “Here we are testing persons so they could know if they have kidney disease or if they are at risk of getting kidney disease.

Based on the theme this year which is ‘Kidney Health for all, Caring for People, Protecting the Planet’, we want persons to eat healthy and stay active because a healthy people will provide a healthy nation.,” Mrs. Davis-Miller said.

The renal team organized a week-long series of activities, such as a church service, a blood collection drive, a webinar, poster competitions and presentations highlighting the importance of kidney health and preventative care.

Health fair attendees welcomed the initiative, with one participant, Suen Palmer praising the organisers for a job well done. “I mean, it's a good initiative. The renal units, I think it's an annual thing that they do. It's a very good initiative. I think it's very helpful to the community overall. It was pretty easy. There wasn't any hiccups. Smooth sailing. Yeah, it was good,” Palmer said.

Following the positive feedback from participants, Davis-Miller sought to reassure those who might feel hesitant about being tested. “They don't need to be scared because it is a regular test that we are doing. What we tend to do is put ourselves in the patient's position. How would we like to be treated? So, we won't treat them unkind. We are here to care for them,” she said.

The nurse manager encouraged the public to adopt healthier lifestyles, including regular screenings, proper hydration, balanced diets and physical activity.

Credit: The Southern Regional Health Authority

In The News: Southern Regional Health Authority

LASCO/NAJ Nurse of the Year Launches Project to Empower Women



Nurse of the Year, Fione Collins (3rd right) shares a photo opportunity with the recipients of her IWIN Project. Photographed are: Donna Burton from the Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation in Mandeville; Kiyanna Sappleton from the Edwin Allen High School (3rd left) and her mom (2nd left; representative from the YADEL Home for Girls (right) and the staff member from the Percy Junor Hospital.

Nurse of the Year for 2025, Fione Collins has launched her Inspiring Women Igniting Newness (IWIN) Project, which provides support to women facing challenges.

Nurse Collins, who is the Deputy Director of Nursing Services at the Percy Junor Hospital (PJH) in Manchester launched the project on March 11, 2026 in Manchester and distributed J\$100, 000 each to four beneficiaries.

The recipients are: YADEL Home for Girls, the Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation in Mandeville, a student at the Edwin Allen High School who will be studying nursing and a staff member at the PJH who lost her home in a fire.

“As part of the LASCO/NAJ Nurse of the Year competition, I have chosen this initiative that will empower our women and girls and help them to build resilience. Many of our women and girls encounter setbacks, struggles and challenges and many times they want to allow these to define them but as somebody who has overcome I want women and girls to know that despite all that is happening they can bounce back and they can achieve their life goals” Nurse Collins said.

She pointed out that the project focuses on areas of education, mental wellness and other areas of need. She added that she hopes the project will continue beyond the competition.

“This is just the beginning. It's not just the financial aspect because one of the things I have started to do is to do motivational talks and empowerment sessions at churches, schools and clubs to help our women and strengthen them. And as our International Women's Day theme said, “Giving to Gain”, so giving so that others can achieve and will be able to inspire others” the Nurse of the Year said.

Nurse Collins, who took the coveted title at the LASCO/NAJ Nurse of the Year awards ceremony in July 2025, expressed thanks to all her stakeholders, family and friends who contributed to making the project launch a successful one. The beneficiaries were appreciative of the kind gesture, noting the tangible impact it will make in making their situations a better one.

Credit: The Southern Regional Health Authority

In The News: Southern Regional Health Authority

Public Encouraged to Donate Blood to Support Renal Patients

The Mandeville Regional Hospital Renal Unit is inviting members of the public to donate blood at its upcoming Blood Drive in observance of World Kidney Week (March 8–14) under the theme “Kidney Health for All.”

The Blood Drive will take place on Tuesday, March 10, 2026, at the Mandeville Regional Hospital Blood Lab, beginning at 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

Renal patients often require blood transfusions due to complications such as anaemia, dialysis-related conditions, or surgical procedures. Maintaining an adequate blood supply is therefore critical to ensuring these patients receive the care they need.

Persons who may be eligible to donate blood include:

- Healthy individuals aged 17–60 years
- Persons with hypertension who are on medication
- Diabetics on oral medication who do not have complications
- Individuals who have sickle cell trait

Members of the public who are eligible to donate are encouraged to come out and support this important initiative. One donation can make a difference.

The renal unit will also host other activities including a free kidney health fair on Wednesday, March 11 on the Mandeville Greens, in the town centre in Manchester at 9:00 am.

Credit: The Southern Regional Health Authority

Collection Centers outside of Corporate Area



Falmouth Hospital	(876) 954 3250
Port Antonio Hospital	(876) 993 2646
St. Ann's Bay Hospital	(876) 972 2272
May Pen Hospital	(876) 986 6307
Mandeville Hospital	(876) 962 2067
Cornwall Regional Hospital	(876) 952 5100
Savanna La Mar Hospital	(876) 955 2533

www.nbts.gov.jm
IG & Twitter: @1bloodbankja

Facilities on the Move

Clarendon Health Department Hosts World Tuberculosis Day Health Fair

On Tuesday, March 24, 2026, the Clarendon Health Department hosted a World Tuberculosis Day Health Fair in May Pen, Clarendon.

Residents were able to access free essential health services including blood pressure checks, HIV & syphilis testing, blood sugar screenings, tuberculosis testing and more.

In addition to these services, attendees were empowered with important information about tuberculosis, its symptoms, prevention methods, and the importance of early detection, which will help them take charge of their health and protect their communities.

The event was held under the theme: “Yes! We Can End TB! Led by countries. Powered by people.”



Facilities on the Move

Chapelton Health District Expands SWIM (Safe Water Institution Management) Programme

Clean water is essential to safe, healthy communities, and on Monday, March 23, the Clarendon Health Department, Chapelton Health District, Public Health Inspectors marked another milestone in the Safe Water Institution Management Programme.

Since its launch, the programme has strengthened water safety practices across institutions by equipping them with testing kits, training, and monitoring tools. Through targeted interventions, facilities are now better able to manage chlorine residual levels, improving overall water quality and reducing health risks.

With measurable progress already achieved, this initiative continues to build awareness, accountability, and safer environments for all.



Facilities on the Move

Clarendon Health Department Hosts Oral Health Competition

On Thursday, March 19, 2026, students from across Clarendon gathered at St. Gabriel Anglican Church for an exciting and impactful Oral Health Competition.

Participants showcased their knowledge and creativity through a variety of categories including quiz, DJ, rap, and poster presentations, all centred around the theme: "A Healthy Mouth is a Healthy Mind."

It was a day filled with learning, talent, and enthusiasm as our young champions highlighted the importance of good oral health in fun and innovative ways.



Facilities on the Move

Oral Health Competition Continues in Manchester

The Manchester Health Department dental team hosted its Oral Health Competition on March 30, 2026, at Cecil Charlton Hall in Mandeville.

Nine primary schools showcased talent in deejay, dub poetry and poster competitions for ages 6–12 under the theme, “A Happy Mouth is a Happy Mind,” promoting healthy oral habits.

Originally set for October, the event was rescheduled after Hurricane Melissa to align with Oral Health Day on March 20.



Facilities on the Move

Manchester Health Department Commemorates World Tuberculosis Day with Health Symposium

On Wednesday, April 1, 2026, the Manchester Health Department hosted a World Tuberculosis (TB) Day Symposium at the Cecil Charlton Hall, bringing together nurses and healthcare workers from vulnerable communities.

Participants took part in interactive sessions and heard from key speakers on TB risks, prevention, testing, and control.

The event was held under the theme “Yes! We Can End TB.”



Facilities on the Move

MHD Strengthens Emergency Preparedness with Simulation Exercise

Preparedness saves lives.

The Manchester Health Department recently facilitated a disaster simulation exercise at the Porus Health Centre to strengthen emergency readiness within its facilities.

The exercise simulated an earthquake followed by a secondary fire, allowing staff and patients to practise appropriate response actions in a controlled setting. With support from key stakeholders, including the Jamaica Fire Brigade, the Jamaica Constabulary Force, and the Manchester Municipal Corporation, the drill assessed coordination, communication, and overall responsiveness.



Facilities on the Move

Manchester Health Department Launches Amazing Smiles Toothbrushing Programme

For World Oral Health Day 2026, the Manchester Health Department launched their “Amazing Smiles” Toothbrushing Programme at the Witter McLain Early Childhood Institute in Spalding, Manchester.

Students were provided with toothbrushes, were taught proper brushing technique and received oral health education. Supervised brushing will now be practiced daily after lunch as part of the programme.

The team also visited Mount Olivet Primary School in Manchester.



Facilities on the Move

Southern Regional Health Authority Nurse Practitioners Lead Men's Day Health Fair Initiative

The Southern Regional Health Authority nurse practitioners hosted a Men's Day Health Fair in Bryce, Manchester on Thursday, March 19, 2026, highlighting the importance of men taking charge of their health.

The event offered a wide range of essential screenings, including blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, PSA testing, dental and mental health checks, and prostate screenings, while promoting early detection and overall wellness.

The initiative was well supported, with strong community turnout and engagement, as men took the opportunity to get checked and encourage each other to prioritise their health.



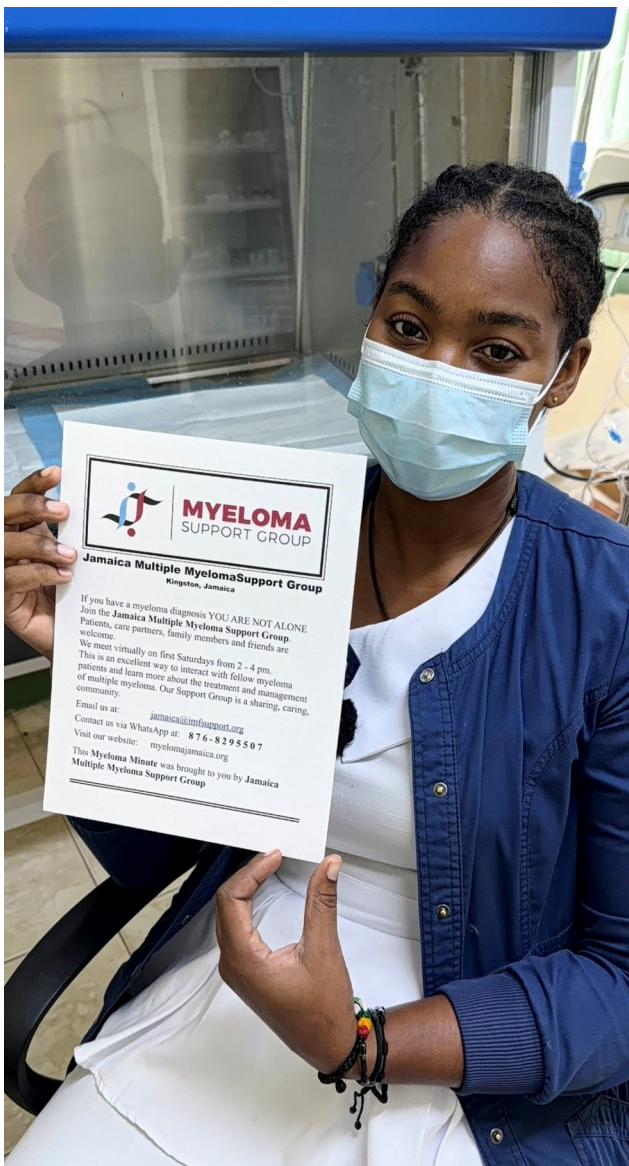
Facilities on the Move

Haematology/Oncology Unit Raises Awareness about Multiple Myeloma

In commemoration of Myeloma Action Month, the team at the Mandeville Regional Hospital Haematology/Oncology Unit used the opportunity to raise awareness about multiple myeloma, the second most common blood cancer affecting plasma cells, on Friday, March 27, 2026.

Symptoms may include anaemia, excessive bleeding, bone pain, and fractures. Diagnosis involves blood and urine tests, along with imaging such as CT scans and MRIs. Treatment options include chemotherapy, targeted therapy, corticosteroids, and bone marrow transplantation.

The Jamaica Multiple Myeloma Support Group also visited the facility, offering education, encouragement, and support while increasing awareness of the condition.



Staff Highlight

Celebrating 23 Years of Cuban Partnership

On Tuesday, March 17, 2026, the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) hosted an appreciation ceremony in honour of Cuban medical professionals, recognizing their outstanding service and dedication to healthcare delivery across the region.

The event brought together stakeholders to acknowledge the vital role these professionals have played in supporting patient care and strengthening the public health system.

The ceremony specifically honoured 36 Cuban healthcare workers and celebrated 23 years of partnership between Jamaica and Cuba in the health sector.



Staff Highlight

From Storm to Strength: Saluting our Health Care Heroes

From storm to strength.

Through the dedicated care of the teams at the Black River, Mandeville Regional and Kingston Public hospitals, Calvin Ramsay is now stronger than ever.

We salute our healthcare heroes for their compassion, skill and unwavering commitment to patient care.

Calvin Ramsay, also known as Silvan, was admitted to Black River Hospital with a suspected stroke after a fall, on the day preceding Hurricane Melissa. The hospital staff protected the patients and continued treatment despite limited resources, even relocating Ramsay to various rooms, and successfully kept all patients alive throughout the hurricane. After the storm, Ramsay was transferred first to Mandeville Hospital and then to Kingston Public Hospital (KPH), where doctors discovered a brain bleed and promptly performed surgery. Following the operation, Ramsay's condition improved significantly; the pressure in his brain decreased, enabling him to converse lucidly, read unaided by glasses, and walk for the first time since the fall. The care provided by the three hospitals has yielded an outstanding recovery, with Ramsay's health now surpassing its state prior to the incident. We express our deepest appreciation to the doctors, nurses, and support staff at Black River Hospital, Mandeville Hospital, and KPH, with special thanks to Dr. Raquel Llewelyn, Dr. Charmaine Muthra, Brian Marshall, Jeneen Campbell, and the Neuro Clinic nurses at KPH.



HR And You:

“PMAS Checklist”

Southern Regional Health Authority
Compassion | Accountability | Respect | Efficiency
PMAS
Performance Management System

PMAS CHECKLIST

- Schedule Performance Review Meetings.
- Conduct Performance Review Meetings with Direct Reports.
- Review PMAS Documents in the Capacity of Reviewing Officer
- Confirm that all PMAS Documents are Signed.
- Submit by: Work Plan - April 30th | Interim Evaluation - Sept 30th | Appraisal - April 15th

DATA PROTECTION ACT EXEMPTIONS

There exists exemptions in the **Jamaica Data Protection Act**, under Part V

- National Security ✓
- Law Enforcement ✓
- Regulatory Activities ✓
- Journalism ✓
- Research ✓
- History and Statistics ✓
- Information Available to the Public ✓

Protect Data • Ensure Compliance • Build Trust!

Wellness Bytes

“Benefits of Blood Donation”



Health & Wellness



YOU'RE **SOMEBODY'S** *Type*

How Does Blood Transfusion Save Lives?

- Replaces blood lost after accidents or surgery
- Delivers oxygen to vital organs like brain and heart
- Treats anemia and diseases like Sickle Cell Disease
- Supports adults and children receiving cancer treatment
- Can save very sick babies with severe illnesses



Call 1 (876) 630-1984

to find your nearest Blood Collection Centre

The Culinary Corner: Easter Edition

Gluten Free Easter Bun

Eat well, live better; healthy eating made easy.

Ingredients

2 cups all purpose gluten free flour
1 cup organic cane sugar
2 tablespoons ground flaxseeds
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/4 cup almond milk
1/4 cup sunflower oil
3 tablespoons molasses
2 teaspoons vanilla
1 1/2 cups dried fruits raisins, cherries, cranberries, etc.
Simple Syrup
2 tablespoons water
2 tablespoons organic cane sugar

Directions

Preheat oven 350°F. Line a baking pan with parchment paper and lightly spray, set aside.

Place all the dry ingredients in a bowl and mix, gluten-free all-purpose flour, sugar, ground flaxseeds, baking powder, spices, salt.

Combine almond milk, sunflower oil, vanilla in a bowl and mix well. Add the wet ingredients to the dry and mix to form a batter. Fold the dried fruits into the batter. Scoop batter into baking pan.

Bake in the center of the oven for 60-75 minutes or until a fork inserted in the middle comes out clean. Transfer baking pan onto a cooling rack.

Meanwhile, prepare the glaze. Spread the glaze on the warm spiced bun. Remove the bun from the pan and allow to cool completely. **Source: healthiersteps.com**



SUBMIT AN ARTICLE

We welcome your input.

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

The Corporate Communications & Public Relations Branch

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The Lighter Side

