



# SOUTHERN REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

3 BRUMALIA ROAD, MANDEVILLE, MANCHESTER, JAMAICA WI  
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## NEWS FEATURE

**August 12, 2015**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

### Southern Region Taps Into Revolutionary Medical Education Initiative

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 collaborative 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 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  
(more)

**Chairman:** Michael Stewart; **Vice Chairman:** Carlton Bailey; **Directors:** Nancy Davis; H Doreen Evans; Claudine Heaven; Hopeton McCatty; Seymour Stewart; Dr. Lundie Richards; Grace Foster-Reid; Nadalie Walker-Rose; **Regional Director and Secretary:** Michael Bent; **Regional Technical Director:** Dr Michael Coombs; **CEO Mandeville Regional Hospital:** Alwyn Miller; **SMO, Mandeville Regional Hospital:** Dr Everton McIntosh



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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.



**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.**

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

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