



SOUTHERN REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

3 BRUMALIA ROAD, MANDEVILLE, MANCHESTER, JAMAICA WI

TEL.: (876) 625-0612-3, 962-9491 or 962-8232 | FAX: (876) 962-8233 | WWW.SRHA.GOV.JM



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PRESS RELEASE

December 16, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

'Zika Virus, the Main Topic at Town Hall Meeting held at Balaclava Community Centre'

The Zika Virus was the main topic of discussion for presenters and community members at a Town Hall Meeting hosted by The St. Elizabeth Health Services at the Balaclava Community Centre under the theme 'Let's Talk Health' on December 8, 2015. The Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) has been making moves to prepare the region for the possible introduction of the Zika Virus in Jamaica.

The meeting commenced with the Welcome and Introduction from the chairman for the event, Mrs. P. Anglin Allie, Family Nurse Practitioner, Balaclava Health District, who said she hopes that the information imparted by the different presenters will prove useful and help in preventing the spread of diseases in the community and other areas. Her opening remarks were followed by the Invocation delivered by Reverend K. Dwyer, Pastor for EMAUS Apostolic Church.

SRHA Parish Manager for St. Elizabeth, Mr. Sean Brissett emphasized the need for the community to, 'clean up' and 'maintain their environment', and take the necessary precautions to prevent the spread of the Zika Virus, should it enter the country. He added that each person has a responsibility to share the information they receive with others to facilitate awareness and spur action.

Three informative presentations were given by Mr. Jermaine McFarlane, Public Health Inspector, Mr. Everod Lewis, Deputy Chief Public Health Inspector and Dr. Tonia Dawkins-Beharie, Medical Officer (Health), St. Elizabeth.

Mr. McFarlane spoke about Personal Hygiene and gave tips on good hygiene habits.

Mr. Lewis, in his presentation on Vector Control, informed community members on the different breeding sites for mosquitoes around the house and other areas. He highlighted the great need for restoration of civic

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duty in 'identifying and eliminating mosquito breeding sites' and also in the fight against the spread of diseases.

In her presentation entitled, 'Zika Virus Infection', Dr. Tonia Dawkins-Beharie cleared up a lot of misconceptions about the spread of diseases by mosquitoes. She informed community members that the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, responsible for the Chikungunya Virus is also the culprit in spreading the Zika Virus. She reminded the community that Zika has been found in the Caribbean and shared how it affects the human body. Dr. Dawkins-Beharie also highlighted the effects it has on babies and urged community members to engage in preventive measures as the virus has no cure.

Mayor of Black River and Chairman of the St. Elizabeth Parish Council, Mr. Everton Fisher, said it is time to put away the 'politicking' as the Zika Virus does not discriminate based on political affiliation and is cause for concern. He urged the community to 'clean up their backyards' and not wait on the government to come to their rescue.

The event was supported by members of the clergy, Councilors, Balaclava Health staff, representatives from the SRHA, members of the media and Balaclava community members.

The Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) has embarked on a series of town hall meetings across the region under the theme **"Let's Talk Health"**. The primary aim of these meetings is to facilitate greater public awareness of the Ministry of Health's programmes and to encourage discussions on various health issues. The meetings also aim at facilitating dialogue between health care providers and the communities the SRHA serves.

(more)

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Regional Health Promotion Officer, Heather Wood Mullings shows the BalACLava community members how to use mosquito repellent.

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Medial Officer (Health), St. Elizabeth, Dr. Tonia Dawkins-Beharie addresses Balaclava community members during her presentation entitled 'Zika Virus Infection'.

(more)

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SRHA Parish Manager for St. Elizabeth, Mr. Sean Brissett, jots down a couple lines before he brings greetings.

(more)

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Audience members listen to Mr. Jermaine McFarlane's presentation on 'Personal Hygiene'.

-30-

For more information contact:
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