

## **St Mary Residents Welcome Adoption of Enfield Clinic**

### From the Jamaica Information Service

Residents of Enfield, St. Mary, have welcomed the adoption of their community's health centre by the Jamaica 55 Charities Group in the United Kingdom (UK), under the Government's Adopt-A-Clinic initiative.

The organisation, comprising members of the Jamaican diaspora community in the UK, has provided \$1 million to assist with improvements at the clinic in response to the Administration's invitation for stakeholder support for the overall endeavour.

This provision is part of an initial \$5 million, which the group generated from fundraising events to support the five clinics they have selected for assistance.

The others include Mount Pleasant Health Centre, Portland; Elderslie Health Centre, St. Elizabeth; Lambs River Health Centre, Westmoreland; and Cascade Health Centre, Hanover.

They are among the 100 shortlisted under the government initiative, out of approximately 320 clinics islandwide, of which Enfield is the first to be adopted.

The Group presented Health Minister, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, with a cheque for \$5 million during his recent visit to London earlier this year.

He, in turn, handed over a cheque in the sum of \$1 million to the management of the Enfield Health Centre during a recent ceremony at the clinic to formally launch the partnership with the Jamaica 55 Charities Group.

It is expected that the funds will be used to undertake renovations, and to install much needed equipment and tools.

Based on the initiative's objectives and the Charities Group's gesture, residents of Enfield, numbering approximately 2,400, anticipate significant benefits redounding to them.

Senior citizen, Cyril Thomas, is optimistic the partnership will result in improved healthcare delivery at the Enfield Clinic.

"What has been said (about the proposed improvements)... we appreciate that very much. We appreciate this clinic very much... because (without it being here), I would have to travel far to get healthcare. But, because it is right here in the community, we are able to come in a short space of time when we feel sick, and get treatment," he tells JIS News.

Mr. Thomas also has high praises for the Centre's staff, particularly the nurses and doctors, whom he describes as "courteous and nice".

"We (find no) fault with them. They are quite okay and they keep the compound very nice and clean. We greatly appreciate what has been said... and look forward to great things to come for the clinic," he adds.

Fellow senior citizen, Venus Mendez, is equally elated and tells JIS News that “I am feeling really happy because of what was announced”.

Mrs. Mendez, who indicates that she has accessed healthcare at the Enfield clinic for all except 10 years of her life when she pursued engagements outside the community, says she, too, anticipates great benefits.

“Yes I do. Sometimes when I come, I encounter a little delay in being attended to by a doctor or nurse... but I have never had to turn back. Although I have had to wait, I have always gotten through at all times. So, I know and do believe that the additional support that will be coming through the adopt-a-clinic programme will be very beneficial, and for that we are extremely grateful,” she adds.

Her daughter, Carol Mendez, is also very upbeat about the anticipated outcomes of the arrangement.

Recounting memories of her childhood involving the Centre, Ms. Mendez tells JIS News that “whenever we, as children of the community, got even a bruise, cut or scrape, we could always run to the nurse here and get it dressed”.

Ms. Mendez says staff members were also keen on promoting proper dental hygiene and, as such, took steps to ensure that toothbrushes and toothpaste were available to the citizens, particularly the youngsters.

The Adopt-A-Clinic initiative, which was launched in 2017, forms part of the Government’s undertaking to boost primary healthcare delivery, and is consistent with the Administration’s 2017/18 social protection policy priority.

Its administration is spearheaded by the Ministry’s Health and Wellness Foundation.

Speaking at the ceremony in Enfield, Dr. Tufton said the initiative provides a vehicle through which persons and organisations in Jamaica and overseas can contribute to further developing the health sector, especially in the communities from which they originated, “in a very organised way where we will ensure that what you are giving has real impact”.

He said the Government’s implementation of the initiative is indicative of its priority focus on strengthening primary healthcare delivery.

“Very often, we overlook and underestimate the importance and contribution of community healthcare delivery to the wellness of individuals and, by extension, the country. We have to stop (thinking like) that because the health of our country starts at the primary level,” the Minister argued.

Against this background, Dr. Tufton said the Enfield Clinic “is giving birth to an initiative which we believe is important (to) community healthcare”.

“I am told that last year, between 1,500 and 1,700 patients were seen at this facility. That is significant, because what it is doing is responding to the needs of this community,” he added.

“Adopt-A-Clinic is an appeal to (local and international) community stakeholder partnership to give back to public health in a way that enhances the health and wellness of communities across Jamaica,” the Minister underscored

Dr. Tufton also indicated that the Ministry has received expressions of interest for the adoption of about 50 clinics from other organisations, including several local corporate entities.



CAPTION

Health Minister, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (centre), converses with resident of Enfield, St. Mary, Venus Mendez (left), during a recent ceremony at the facility to mark its formal adoption by the Jamaica 55 Charities Group in the United Kingdom, under the Government’s Adopt-A-Clinic initiative. At right is another resident, Catherine Hylton.



CAPTION

Health Minister, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (centre right), H. E. Seth George Ramocan, High Commissioner for Jamaica to the UK (centre left), and the Jamaica55 Charities Group (UK)