



# NEWS LETTER

March 2007

Dear Colleagues,

*I bring you greetings on behalf of the Council of MAJ. The past three months have been for us the best of times and the worst of times but we have remained steadfast in our commitment to meet the needs of our members.*

## ADVOCACY

### 1. The Regionalization/ Decentralization Debate.

The recent impasse between the SERHA, the Senior Medical Officer and the Anaesthesiologist at the National Chest Hospital brought into sharp focus the clear and present danger that public health care providers employed to the regional health authorities face due to;

- I. The Absence of security of tenure.
- II. The ill-defined career pathways.
- III. The lack of dialogue and participation in decision-making processes in which the input of health care professionals has not been accorded the appropriate respect.
- IV. The poor functional and structural organization of the tiers of management leading to questionable clinical decisions resulting in sub-optimal health care.

We have again called on the Ministry of Health to established a broad-based commission with representation drawn from the members of the Medical Association of Jamaica, the Nurses Association of Jamaica and other allied health care workers to critically assess the above issues and make appropriate recommendations to institute a system of organizational reform which will ensure that the weaknesses in the system are removed, and that due process in the management of the health services is followed at all times.

## THE CHILD CARE AND PROTECTION ACT

The Child Registry is a new agency established under the Child Care and Protection Act. It will be the central place for reporting incidents of children who are known or suspected to be abused, neglected or in need of care and protection. The Registry records, assesses and refers reports to other agencies, which will investigate and intervene. The Child Care and Protection Act stipulates that all persons are legally obligated to make a report once they know or suspect that a reportable incident has occurred or is likely to occur.

The law also identifies prescribed persons (professionals who have a duty of care towards children) who have a strict duty to report, based on information they receive in the course of their work regarding the neglect or abuse of children.

Under section 6 (1) of the CCPA, doctors, nurses, dentists or other health professionals are deemed as prescribed persons. Any person making a report in good faith will be immune from criminal liability.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The MAJ will be launching its Hypertension and Asthma guidelines at the Annual Symposium in June. These guidelines will significantly enhance the knowledge base of all health care providers and impact positively on the quality of lives of our patients.

## HEALTH PLAN FOR DOCTORS

On February 9, 2007, Blue Cross of Jamaica in collaboration with MAJ launched a Health Plan to provide medical coverage for members of the MAJ. This is an excellent safety net for physicians and their dependents; a net that is critical in these times as we grapple with the challenges



imposed by the high cost of obtaining optimum health care. The plethora of benefits is truly impressive and we note that most medical needs have been addressed.

We are particularly impressed with the overseas emergency benefit which is a need that has never been effectively met by any other health care provider. Through this strategic alliance Blue Cross of Jamaica is ensuring that Doctors maintain good health and can access superior health insurance benefits in times of need.

For further information please contact the Medical Association of Jamaica Secretariat.

### Jamaica AIDS Support for Life (JASFL)

The Support Services Department of Jamaica AIDS Support for life Montego Bay Office is making an urgent appeal for a medical doctor who will be able to volunteer his/her services twice per month in treating clients who are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, Sex Workers and the hearing impaired will also be clientele of this service.

For any additional information please contact them at 978-2345 or visit their website

[www.jamaicaaidsupport.com](http://www.jamaicaaidsupport.com)

### CONDOLENCES

We would like to express our sincere condolences to the families of our esteemed colleagues Dr. George Provan MB,BS(London UWI) and Dr. Courtney Gordon MB,BS (London UWI), FRCpath and to Dr. Elise J. Robinson FRCOG, and Dr. Janice Robinson MD on the loss of their brother the late Professor Leslie Robinson former principal of UWI, Mona.

### BEST WISHES

On behalf of the MAJ family let me also extend best wishes to Dr. Jephthah Ford who was recently seriously injured during an altercation with members of the National Security Forces. We wish Dr. Ford a speedy recovery. We anticipate that the matter will be thoroughly investigated and that justice will prevail.

### CONGRATULATIONS

Dr. Winston Dawes on his recent appointment as adjunct Professor of Sports Medicine at the University of Technology (Utech)

Dr. Ernest Madu on his appointment as adjunct Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine and Imaging Technology at Utech.

Dr. Winston Davidson on his recent appointment as adjunct Professor of Public Health and Health Technology at Utech.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

MAJ Annual Symposium 2007

Date: June 7-10

Theme: Common Diseases: The Challenges and Strategies in Improving Treatment Outcomes.

Venue: The Jamaica Pegasus Hotel

Medical Association of Jamaica Annual Awards Banquet:

Date: June 9, 2007

Guest Speaker: Professor Daniel Jones

Vice Chancellor, Health Affairs and Dean of the School of Medicine & Herbert G. Langford, Professor of Medicine from the University of Mississippi.

The awardees are: Professor Robert H. Gray and Drs John McHardy and Locksley Gordon.

This year's events promise to be a memorable and intellectually stimulating one.

Please contact the Medical Association of Jamaica Secretariat for further information regarding pre-conference registration and bookings for the interactive workshops.

Further details regarding the symposium can be obtained by visiting our website at: [www.medicalassnjamaica.com](http://www.medicalassnjamaica.com)

*Let me wish you and your family a Holy Easter and we look forward to continue serving you for the rest of the year.*

Dr. Alverston Bailey  
President

