



# NEWS LETTER

November 2006

Dear Colleagues,

*I would like to express my deepest appreciation to you all for affording me and my team the opportunity to serve you for another term.*

*I can assure you that the Medical Association of Jamaica (MAJ) remains committed to our mission which is to address the needs and welfare of all our members and to be a strong advocate for all our patients thus ensuring that their health and wellbeing is preserved.*

*Over the past few months the profession has been severely challenged, as we try to provide optimum care in an austere economic environment and we appeal to you all to give us your unqualified support as we strive valiantly to meet our objectives.*

## ADVOCACY

We continue to play an active role in advocacy as outlined below:

### 1. Decentralization

The MAJ remains steadfast in its advocacy for an urgent review of the health reform process which have failed to meet almost all of its stated objectives re: health planning, service delivery, accountability, transparency, communication and community involvement.

We strongly recommend that a broad based committee be established to review the health reform programme and improve on its capabilities or rescind it if it is proven to be a drain on our scarce resources.

### 2. User Fees

We are quite concerned by the grave disquiet which has arisen, re: the user fees protocol being used in the Public Hospitals and Clinics. We believe that the present method for determining user fees is not efficient, transparent, and equitable and we have

appealed to the Ministry of Health as a matter of urgency to put in appropriate systems to address this deficiency.

### 3. The Right to Health Care

The MAJ in collaboration with the National Aids Committee in Jamaica is actively proposing that the right to "the highest attainable standard of health" be included in the Charter of Rights bill and we ask that you play an active role in this debate.

### 4. Routine Provider Initiated HIV testing

The Ministry of Health, Health Promotion & Protection Division is inviting all doctors to participate in a routine provider initiated HIV testing.

This is part of a mandate to scale-up HIV testing in an attempt to identify positive persons early in the course of their infection so that they may enter prevention, treatment and care services at a time when it can really make a positive impact on the quality (and quantity) of their lives.

The test is to be done with the verbal consent of the patient and should not be performed on any patient who does not wish it done, that is, the "Opt-Out Approach" is to be utilized. Appropriate counseling and referral of these patients must be repeated at a conventional laboratory for confirmation. Additionally, all positives should be notified to the Parish Health Department. For further information please contact Ms. Debbie Carrington, Coordinator-Treatment, Care and Support for PLWHAs at 967-1100.

## THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH ISSUES HEALTH ALERT

The Ministry of Health has recently identified four cases of malaria in Kingston and St. Catherine. A thorough and intensive



investigation is now underway to establish whether these cases have been imported or contracted locally.

Malaria is transmitted by the Anopheles mosquito. The symptoms of malaria include fever, flu-like symptom with chills, headaches, muscle ache and tiredness.

All doctors are advised to report any suspected cases of malaria immediately to Dr. Eva Lewis-Fuller, Director, Health Promotion and Protection Division.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The MAJ type 2 diabetes guidelines is now available and will be distributed to all doctors by the end of this year. We would like to express our deep appreciation to Sanofi Aventis for sponsoring its production, and to our 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Dr. Rosemarie Wright-Pascoe, who authored this edition. A hypertension guideline is now being developed and will be available by March next year.

### BENEFITS

The MAJ in collaboration with American Home Assurance Company has prepared a comprehensive, personal, accident and disability insurance package for you. Please contact the secretariat for further information.

We have also negotiated an affordable and comprehensive health insurance package for doctors and their dependents with Blue Cross of Jamaica Limited; this scheme will be launched in early December.

### CONDOLENCES

We would like to express our deep condolence to Dr Aileen Standard-Goldson on the passing of her mother and the families of Dr. Samuel Morgan and Dr. Barrington Wint. (CD)

### CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations are in order for:

- . Dr. Winston Clarke (CD) on receipt of the Gleaner honor award for health & wellness
- . Dr. Tomlin Paul on receipt of the UWI/Guardian Life Premium Teaching award 2006

- III. Prof. Terrence Forrester on receipt of the Anthony Sabga Caribbean award for Excellence
- IV. Prof the Hon Errol Morrison (OJ), on being elected fellow of the Royal Society of Health.
- V. Dr. Alverston Bailey on being elected fellow of the Caribbean College of Family Physicians.
- VI. Dr. Kenrick Barrow, CD (Order of Distinction in the rank of Commander)
- VII. *Dr. William Foster, CD (Order of Distinction in the rank of Commander)*
- VIII. *Prof. Owen Morgan, OJ (Order of Jamaica)*
- IX. *Dr. Hugh Vaughan, CD (Order of Distinction in the rank of Commander)*
- X. *Dr. Wendel Guthrie, CD (Order of Distinction in the rank of commander)*
- XI. *Dr. Pauline Milbourn, CD (Order of Distinction in the rank of Commander)*

### UPCOMING MAJ EVENTS

Wellness Committee Seminar  
 Date: Sunday, December 10, 2006  
 Venue: Knutsford Court hotel  
 Time: 9:00 am  
 Theme: Balancing Life & Career

MAJ Fundraising Dinner & Dance  
 Date: Saturday, December 16, 2006  
 Venue: 14 Melwood Avenue, Cherry Gardens  
 Time: 7:00pm

MAJIF Risk Management Seminar  
 Date: Sunday, April 15, 2007

MAJ's Annual Symposium 2007  
 Date: June 7-10, 2007  
 Venue: The Jamaica Pegasus Hotel  
 Theme: Common Diseases: "The Challenges & Strategies in improving treatment outcomes"

*Let me wish you and your family a peaceful and safe Christmas season and we look forward to continue serving you in the coming year.*

Dr Alverston Bailey  
President

