



NEWS LETTER

November 2007

Dear Colleagues,

It has been an eventful two months since the new executive was voted into office on the 30th September, 2007. The democratic process is alive and well in the organisation. The post of President was vied for by two candidates and this created quite a bit of debate. We are extremely pleased to see the involvement of our members in the process and we invite all members to continue to actively participate in the activities of the Medical Association of Jamaica. This can only auger well for the organisation. Please acquaint yourselves with the wonderful members of the executive who have committed to give their time and energy to our organisation.

Goals and Objectives of the New Executive
Medical Education, Clinical Care, Ethics

The MAJ will continue to offer high-quality continuing medical education to our members with our branches monthly events, with the annual symposium and the Disease Management Guidelines. This new executive will focus on high quality clinical practice and ethics. We propose to have a seminar on ethics at each of our regional branches and to design a "Standards of Care" brochure. We will be celebrating a Medical Doctor's Week where we will highlight the central role that we play in ensuring a healthy nation.

Philanthropy

We will expand on our philanthropic activities by adopting the Sir John Golding Centre.

Advocacy

The MAJ will continue to be an advocate for our members and for the public health sector. We intend to continue to interface with decision makers in government and opposition

Meetings with the Minister of Health.

I would like to report that we have had three (3) meaningful meetings with the new Minister of Health, the Honourable Rudyard Spence where we highlighted some of the acute problems in the hospitals and the primary care clinics. The Minister there and then ordered some changes which should have an immediate effect on the service we offer the public. We will have a follow-up meeting with him in February 2008. We will continue to press for an increase in the budgetary allocation to health.

Task Force on the Regional Health Authorities

We have also been invited to participate in the review process of the regional health authorities. We had two intense meetings with key persons from all over the

island and we have submitted our position to the task force. I would really like to commend and thank those of our colleagues who braved the inclement weather and on a Sunday, to boot, to participate in the process.

Courtesy Calls

We have had courtesy calls with the Canadian High Commissioner, His Excellency Denis Kingsley, where we discussed possible organisations to collaborate with for the continuing training of you our members and for funding some of our proposed projects for this year. The meeting with Mrs. Lenice Bennett, Executive Director of the Students Loan Bureau, where we discussed the untenable position some nineteen (19) medical students at the University of the West Indies, now find them selves in was extremely productive. Our colleague and PAHO/ WHO Representative to Jamaica, Dr Ernest Pate at our courtesy call, gave us an overview of the Pan American Health Organisation and offered suggestions as to how we can achieve some of our objectives.

Our final meeting was with the Governor General, His Excellency, Professor Sir Kenneth Hall where we discussed the state of public health and health tourism.

PROFILE ON THE NEW EXECUTIVE



Dr. Rosemarie Wright-Pascoe - President
Dr Wright-Pascoe is a Consultant Physician and Endocrinologist at the University Hospital of the West Indies and a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Medicine at the University of the West Indies.



Dr. Winston De La Haye – 1st Vice President

Dr De La Haye is a Consultant Psychiatrist and Clinical Director of the Detoxification Unit of the University Hospital of the West Indies as well as Lecturer and Postgraduate Psychiatry Coordinator in the Department of Community Health/Psychiatry at the University of the West Indies.



Dr. Fay Whitbourne – 2nd Vice President
Dr Whitbourne is a Consultant Clinical Pathologist at Central Medical



Laboratories Limited and a Family Physician at the Diabetes Centre with special interest and certification in Diabetology and Menopause Management.



Dr. Ann Jackson-Gibson – Honorary Secretary
Dr Gibson is a Consultant Anaesthetist at the Kingston Public, National Chest and Victoria Jubilee Hospitals.



Dr. Takeyce Palmer – Asst. Honorary Secretary
Dr Palmer is an Acting Consultant Anaesthetist at the Kingston Public, National Chest and Victoria Jubilee Hospitals.



Dr. Neville Graham – Honorary Treasurer
Dr Graham is a Consultant General & Vascular Surgeon at the Kingston Public Hospital as well as Chairman and Founding Member of the Winchester Surgical and Medical Institute.



Dr. Lucien Tomlinson – Asst. Honorary Treasurer
Dr Tomlinson is a Senior Registrar in General Surgery at the Spanish Town Hospital.

THE DENGUE FEVER UPDATE

Dr Eva Lewis-Fuller wishes to reinforce the importance of Recognition, Treatment and Prevention of Dengue Fever and its potential complications to all Doctors.

Dengue Fever is an acute febrile viral illness transmitted from person to person by an infected *Aedes Egypti* mosquito. Symptoms, usually non-specific when uncomplicated, include fever, headache, muscle and eye pain and skin rash.

Viruses of multiple serotypes (1-4) exist and recovery from infection with one serotype only confers immunity against that type.

Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever (DHF) may occur in patients re-infected with another serotype of the virus and must be considered if all the following are present: fever, haemorrhagic tendencies, thrombocytopenia and plasma leakage due to increased capillary permeability.

Dengue Shock Syndrome (DSS) is diagnosed when signs of shock concur with criteria for DHF.

All suspected DHF/DSS should be notified to the Health Department immediately on suspicion. Dengue Fever cases should be listed and the information forwarded to the Health Department or Surveillance Unit, Ministry of Health on a *daily basis*.

To prevent the transmission of the disease, ask patients to destroy all potential breeding sites in and around the home and do the following control activities:

- clean and empty containers like open vases, bottles and drums regularly
- empty and discard objects that can hold water eg tyres, coconut husks.

DO NOT GIVE ASPIRIN TO PERSONS SUSPECTED OF HAVING DENGUE FEVER as this may worsen the tendency to bleed.

CORNER ON MAJIF (Pharmacy Council) Concerns Regarding Physician Dispensing

Where Physician Dispensing is allowed, the offices are subject to laws governing drugs:

- dispensing responsibilities CANNOT BE DELEGATED
- if a registered nurse fills a prescription, that prescription MUST BE CHECKED by the physician prior to its release to the patient
- physicians must ensure accurate labeling, adequate security for drugs and maintenance of proper inventory records
- physicians can DISPENSE ONLY TO THEIR PATIENTS and prescription records must be kept in accordance with the Law subject to inspection.

There are no laws in Jamaica that govern physician dispensing!!!

Issues against Physician Dispensing

- Increased risk of medication errors
- Pharmacist checks are eliminated
- Inadequate or no counseling
- Difficulty in managing inventory resulting in inadequate storage

Contentious Issues Faced by Pharmacists

- Many prescriptions written by physicians are illegible giving rise to increased possibility of errors
- Most prescriptions do not meet the legal requirements (see parameters below)
- Failure of physicians to validate verbal prescriptions
- Writing of prescriptions for off-label use of products
- Prescriptions written by interns not countersigned by registered practitioners

Parameters of a Prescription

According to Pharmacy Regulations: Every prescription for a drug should include:

- date



- name, age, address of the person for whom the prescription is issued
- name, generic name and quantity of substance to be supplied
- adequate directions for use of the substance prescribed
- usual signature of the prescriber and name in legible print form
- address, telephone number and registration number of the prescriber

PROVIDING CONTRACEPTIVES FOR PERSONS UNDER 16 YRS (MOH)

These are Reproductive Health Policy Guidelines for Health Professionals (from the Ministry of Health) on Providing Contraceptives to persons under 16 yrs of age

- Any such individual requesting services should be registered whether or not he/she is accompanied by an adult, has a referral or visits on own volition; and should be directed to a health professional
- The health professional must provide counseling and contraceptive-related services such as confidentiality, non-judgemental information and respect; if confidentiality must be breached (in case of STIs, pregnancy, sexual violence) the minor should be told about the disclosure and its possible consequences.
- The health professional must promote abstinence with full explanation of its benefits.
- The health professional should give the minor clear and detailed information on all non-surgical contraceptives; as well as encourage dual protection to reduce the risk of acquiring STIs.
- The health professional must ensure follow-up of any individual to whom contraceptive is given.

These policy guidelines from the MOH are not motivated by a desire to sanction or encourage the engagement of children in sexual activity. It is based on the reality of the high incidence of sexual activities involving children \leq 16yrs and on the recognition of the need to take action to prevent unwanted pregnancies and transmission of STIs.

CONDOLENCES

We would like to express our deepest condolences to Janet Anderson on the untimely passing of her father of Dr A. S Brown, and to Maurice, Adrian and Richard Lethbridge on the death of their mother, Dr Rosemary Lethbridge-Bond.

CONGRATULATIONS

We wish to offer the heartiest congratulations to our following colleagues who have been recognized for the outstanding service they have given to this honorable profession:

Professors Maureen Samms-Vaughn and Joseph Fredrick and Drs Barbara Lyle-Harper and Ivor Crandon on receipt of the Order of Distinction in the Rank of Commander; and Drs Errol Daley, Peter Wellington, Grantel Dundas and Wendel Abel on receipt of the Order of Distinction in the Rank of Officer.

UPCOMING MAJ EVENTS

MAJ Fundraising Dinner & Dance

Date: Saturday, December 15, 2007

Venue: 14 Melwood Avenue, Cherry Gardens

Time: 7:00pm

MAJIF Risk Management Seminar

Date: Sunday, April 20, 2008

MAJ's Annual Symposium 2008

Venue: The Jamaica Pegasus Hotel

Date: June 5-8, 2008

We invite you our members to comment on any issue that you feel is of interest to you. We have a new email address that is dedicated to your communicating with me which is majdoctors@cwjamaica.com. We invite you to use this. I am excited at the kind of discussions we may have.

We invite you to attend the executive meetings, which will be held in Montego Bay in March 2008 and in Mandeville in February 2008. We propose to tour the public hospitals in these areas and we invite all the private practitioners in the area to accompany us and acquaint yourselves with the hospitals you send your patients to.

Congeniality, camaraderie and socialization with our members are important to us. We wish to remind you to work hard but also to play hard. With this in mind, our Travelers Club will be having one-day tours to different places in Jamaica. Look out for the details.

Let us end the year with a bang. Bring your loved ones, your friends, your staff members to our Christmas dinner and dance. It will be a gastronomic affair, filled with fun and entertainment. We look forward to seeing you there.

On behalf of the Executive and Council let me wish you a happy and peaceful Christmas Season and a New Year filled with prosperity. We will look forward to serving you in the coming year.

Dr Rosemarie Wright-Pascoe
President

