

HEALTH HERALD



Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (left), Minister of Health & Wellness, in discussion with His Excellency N. Nick Perry, United States Ambassador to Jamaica, during the opening ceremony for a new therapeutic, multi-function child-friendly space at Ewarton in St. Catherine.

HEALTH MINISTRY, PARTNERS OPEN NEW CHILD-FRIENDLY SPACE IN ST. CATHERINE

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Cabinet approves Prescriptive Rights for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses

Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton has announced Cabinet's approval of prescriptive rights for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs).

"Under this model, Family Nurse Practitioners and Mental Health Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners in Government Health Facilities and the University Hospital of the West Indies will be granted prescriptive authority under specific conditions," the Minister told Parliament.

Those conditions include that no private practice privileges and that medical practitioners assess all the new patients, as well as review the patient when a new problem emerges or when the patient becomes unstable.

They also include that Mental Health Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners and Family Nurse Practitioners should be registered by the Nursing Council of Jamaica as APRNs and meet the specific training requirements and continuing education hours as determined by the Nursing Council of Jamaica.

Further, at the University Hospital of the West Indies, a Senior Resident or Consultant at the hospital must see all patients discharged.

The amendments aim to further streamline patient care as all patients should be assessed and diagnosed by a Medical Officer and ongoing follow-on care provided by the family nurse practitioner and mental health psychiatric nurse practitioner.

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Prescriptive rights for nurses

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This is according to established clinical protocols once the patient's condition is within the scope of practice and clinical management level of the family nurse practitioner and mental health psychiatric nurse practitioner. If signs and symptoms do not respond to treatment as expected, the patient will be referred to a Medical Officer.

Cabinet has given its approval for the issuance of drafting instructions to the Chief Parliamentary Counsel for amendments to the Nurses and Midwives Act and the Pharmacy Act to accommodate the registration and licensure of APRNs, including family nurse practitioners, mental health psychiatric nurse practitioners, and nurse anaesthetists.

"It is important to highlight that regarding nurse anaesthetists, the Ministry is not pursuing prescriptive authority at this time. Instead, the focus is on accommodating their licensure and registration under a legal framework, recognising the advanced training and critical role they play in patient care," Dr Tufton said.

"This milestone underscores the Government's commitment to healthcare excellence. Despite, the success of the Nurse Practitioner Programme initiated in 1977, these professionals have not been recognised under the Nurses and Midwives Act," the Minister added.

"The amendments ... signify a dynamic evolution of our healthcare system to meet the diverse needs of our population," he said further.

The amendments to the Nurses and Midwives Act are multifaceted.

"They seek to accommodate the licensure and registration of APRNs, regulate the registration, licensure, and training of APRNs, and uphold proper standards of professional conduct among individuals registered under the Nurses and Midwives Act," Dr. Tufton explained.

This also, he said, represents a progressive step towards a more inclusive and effective healthcare system.

"By acknowledging the expertise of APRNs and granting them the necessary authority, we are not only enhancing their roles but also ensuring a healthier future for all Jamaicans," the Minister noted.

"This landmark moment aligns with our National Development Plan and the Vision for Health," he added.

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NEW CHILD-FRIENDLY SPACE OPENS IN ST. CATHERINE

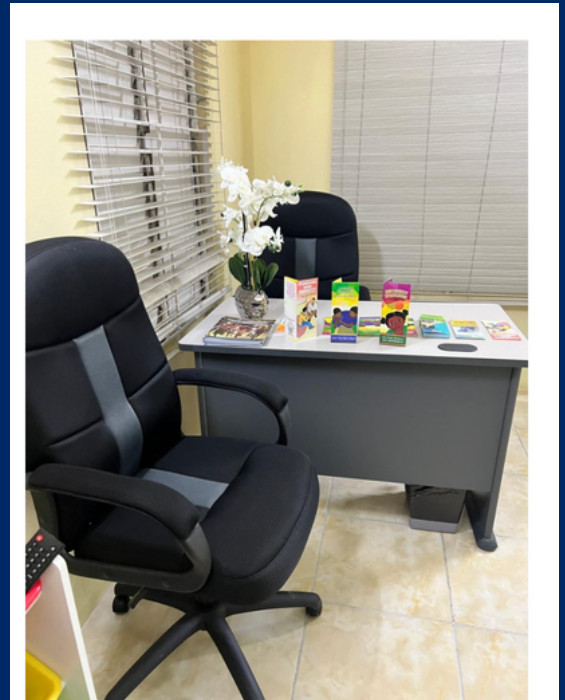
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The Ministry of Health & Wellness together with the St. Catherine Health Services have opened the doors to a new child-friendly space that is to serve the mental health needs of young people.

The therapeutic, multi-function, child-friendly space, located on the grounds of the Ewarton Health Centre in St. Catherine, is the result of the Child Protection Compact (CPC) between the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) and the Government of the United States.

The CPC is intended to strengthen the efforts of the GOJ to effectively prosecute and convict child traffickers and to work with civil society to identify victims of child trafficking, to provide trauma-informed care for child victims and to prevent child trafficking in all its forms.

To aid those efforts, the partnership has, among other things, been using existing infrastructure for the creation of child-friendly spaces across the country.



A section of the new child-friendly space, located on the grounds of the Ewarton Health Centre in St. Catherine.

“We have in this renovated space a vital resource for the protection of our young people from the potential long-term impact of adverse childhood experiences and adverse community experiences,” said Minister of Health & Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, who was guest speaker at the official handover and opening, held earlier today in St. Catherine.

“These include the realities of human trafficking to which the CPC specifically responds; poor housing; violence and community disruption; as well as unidentified and untreated emotional and behavioural disorders,” he added.

According to the Minister, such experiences expose children and adolescents to a range of psychosocial challenges, including substance use, depression, suicide, homicide, sexually transmitted infections, as well as increases in communicable and non-communicable diseases.

A promotional graphic for mental health awareness featuring two young women taking a selfie. The text asks "How Much Are You Willing To Share For Your Mental Wellness?" and provides contact information for the Ministry of Health & Wellness.

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