

# HEALTH HERALD

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**TAFARI HYLTON AND NIKISHA HARRIS  
WIN MR. & MS. HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

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# Jamaica Welcomes Nigerian Nurse Educators



Jamaica's health sector has received a vital boost with the arrival of four volunteer nurses from Nigeria, who will serve for two years under the Nigerian Technical Aid Corps programme. Their expertise comes at a critical time, as the country works to ease severe shortages of specialist nurses.

The initiative supports the World Health Organisation's call for equitable access to health workers and innovative approaches to sharing workforce capacities.

"We face an unprecedented demand for qualified, compassionate health professionals. The global health workforce crisis, particularly the shortage of skilled nurses – is one of the most pressing challenges of our time," said Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, Minister of Health & Wellness. "But today we are demonstrating what is possible when countries move beyond competition and towards collaboration."

Two of the nurses are... PhD-qualified educators in Community Health and Mental Health Nursing who will support training programmes at the University of Technology and the In-Service Training and Education Unit, with the latter expected to train more than 200 nurses annually.

The other two volunteers – both Registered Nurses and Midwives – will serve under the South East Regional Health Authority, mentoring specialist nurses in training.

Jamaica continues to face a shortage of specialist nurses across several areas, including midwifery, psychiatry, critical care, oncology and paediatrics. The Ministry is advancing its Nursing and Midwifery Human Resources Plan, and the Minister has encouraged Registered Nurses to pursue specialist training, reminding of available support such as the Dr. Barry Wint Scholarship.



# Mr. & Ms. Wellness 2025 Celebrates the Heart of Healthcare



In a vibrant display of creativity, confidence, and camaraderie, the Mr. & Ms. Health and Wellness Pageant lit up the stage as one of the most anticipated events of this year's Healthcare Workers Appreciation Month, hosted by the Ministry of Health & Wellness.

The pageant was far more than a talent show, it was a heartfelt celebration of the people behind the Ministry's mission. Seventeen Healthcare workers from across the Ministry embraced the opportunity to step out of their day-to-day roles and showcase their personalities, passions, and wellness journeys in front of a lively and supportive audience.

Emerging as Mr. & Ms. Health and Wellness 2025 were Tafari Hylton and Nikisha Harris, from the National Council on Drug Abuse. Their charisma, stage presence, and clear passion made them worthy titleholders.

Joining them on the winners' podium were:

- 1st Runners-Up: Kevan Gilbert and Chericia Haslam, whose poise, passion, and stage presence earned enthusiastic applause;
- 2nd Runners-Up: Jerome Morant and Shameka Burford, who delivered standout performances with excellence and precision.

Each contestant brought something special to the stage, whether it was humour, heartfelt insight, creative expression, or bold self-assurance, demonstrating that wellness is more than a buzzword; it's a personal commitment and collective culture.

The Mr. & Ms. Health and Wellness Pageant continues to be a signature event for Healthcare Workers Appreciation Month. Most importantly, it reminds us that even as healthcare workers continue to give so much of themselves to others, they too deserve to be seen, celebrated, and supported in every way.

# Honouring Our Healthcare Heroes in July



The Ministry of Health & Wellness has once again rolled out the pink carpet in honour of the more than **23,000** dedicated healthcare workers across Jamaica.

Now in its third year, Healthcare Workers Appreciation Month is a time to reflect on the remarkable service, sacrifice, and strength of the men and women who keep our health system going, from nurses and doctors to porters, lab technicians, administrative personnel, public health inspectors, and vector control teams.

“This month of celebration is a small token of our immense gratitude,” says Mr Errol Greene, Permanent Secretary. “Our healthcare workers are not just essential, they are invaluable. Their efforts touch every parish, every home, and every Jamaican. They are the heart of our nation’s health system, working tirelessly in the face of every challenge, from prevention to recovery, their impact is felt in moments both ordinary and extraordinary.”

## National Highlights

The national calendar features a robust line-up of Ministry-led engagements, including:

- A National Thanksgiving Church Service held in Ocho Rios on Sunday, July 6
- Mr. and Ms Health and Wellness held Saturday, July 26
- Staff Rewards and Recognition Reception held Thursday, July 31

## A Shared Moment of Gratitude

Regional Health Authorities, as well as other institutions and agencies will also mount their own expressions of gratitude during the month. However, the core message remains the same: Jamaica’s health system stands strong because of the people behind it.

From porters and pharmacists to epidemiologists and engineers, this is your moment.

To each healthcare worker: Thank you for choosing to serve. Your commitment saves lives, shapes futures, and secures the health of the nation.



# PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS FROM HEALTHCARE WORKERS APPRECIATION MONTH





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# Introducing Mr. & Ms. Health & Wellness

We proudly celebrate **Nikisha Harris**, Clinical Psychologist, and **Tafari Hylton**, Research Officer at the National Council on Drug Abuse, as this year's Mr. and Ms. Health and Wellness.

Nikisha brings vibrant energy to wellness with her love for dancing, miming, and nature-based activities, guided by Maya Angelou's powerful words: "**People will never forget how you made them feel.**" Her vision champions a transformative, client- and practitioner-centred healthcare system that prioritises resilience and holistic care.

Tafari, a passionate researcher with a flair for comics, gaming, and blogging, is grounded in the reality that "**Human life is fragile and fleeting.**" His vision is for a health system that can effectively meet all of Jamaica's health demands.

Together, they embody wellness through purpose, passion, and vision—true ambassadors of the Ministry of Health & Wellness.



## CREDITS:

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