



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Attention: All News Editors

Health Facilities Enter Emergency Mode

KINGSTON, Jamaica. Thursday, October 23, 2024: Public hospitals across the island have now entered emergency mode as the Ministry of Health and Wellness progresses preparedness efforts in anticipation of impact from Tropical Storm Melissa.

Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, MP gave the update on Thursday during a press briefing at the Office of the Prime Minister.

"While the facilities remain open, outpatient services and elective surgeries have been suspended; visitations limited and family members asked to arrange for pickup of their relatives, who have been admitted for non-critical reasons," the Minister said.

Meanwhile, health centres across the island remained open up to 4:00 p.m. today. A further update on their operations will be provided tomorrow.

The Minister also signalled readiness for the weather system including human resource capacity, power systems, medical supplies and infection prevention and control measures.

"75% of priority facilities have functional backup electricity systems (generators with fuel reserves) capable of sustaining power for 72 hours post-disaster," Dr. Tufton said.

-MORE-

Contact: Kedgesha Watkis, Senior Public Relations Officer at 876-532-2784

Like and follow us: www.facebook.com/themohgovim; <https://twitter.com/themohgovim>; <https://instagram.com/themohgovim>

Visit our website: <https://www.moh.gov.jm/>



The Post-Beryl Generator Project had equipped 21 primary care facilities, increasing total coverage from 39 to 60 facilities.

In terms of medical gas supplies, the Minister highlighted that provisions were available. "Strategic stockpiles of medications and medical consumables have been verified and are maintained at minimum 72-hour levels," the Minister added.

At the same time, hospital in-patient capacity stands at approximately 5,000 beds, with 20 operating theatre units, and 19 emergency rooms prepared across the public system. Plans are in place for the rapid deployment of mobile response teams, if required.

"I encourage all Jamaicans to work with us to ensure their safety and good health. Ensure you have at least 72 hours of essentials in a storm-ready kit, including non-perishable food, water, medications, flashlight, battery-powered radio and extra batteries," the Minister said.

Members of the public with chronic illnesses (diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease, respiratory ailments) are to keep medications on hand and have emergency plans in place, should services be disrupted.

-END-