



## PRESS RELEASE

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*Attention: All News Editors*

### **Health Ministry raises standard of maternal care with new Emergency Obstetrics Protocols**

**KINGSTON, Jamaica. Tuesday, February 17, 2026:** Newly developed maternal health guidelines are set to raise the standard of maternal care across public health facilities, marking a significant step in Jamaica's commitment to improving maternal and newborn health outcomes.

The Ministry of Health and Wellness formally handed over the newly developed Maternal Health Guidelines on Monday (February 16) to obstetrics teams serving public hospitals.

Addressing the ceremony held at the Spanish Town Hospital, Minister of State in the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the Hon. Krystal Lee, MP noted that the protocols were designed to transform care for mothers and newborns.

"We recognise the immense burden of risks women are exposed to when receiving care during childbirth, and those faced by newborn babies in the first few weeks of life. It is our desire to ensure the best service in maternal and newborn care, and to improve outcomes for all involved," the State Minister said.

The comprehensive emergency obstetrics protocols are the work of the Guideline Development Committee (GDC), led by maternofetal medicine specialist, Dr. Leroy Campbell. The protocols address the leading contributors to maternal morbidity and mortality in Jamaica, including postpartum haemorrhage, hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, venous thromboembolism, sepsis, cardiac disease, sickle cell disease, and obesity.

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## **More Women Seeking Care**

The ceremony took place against the backdrop of more women seeking care during pregnancy, as the Ministry of Health and Wellness strengthens measures to reduce preventable maternal and neonatal deaths.

“Access is improving,” Minister Lee added, “and the country is seeing a decrease in maternal deaths”.

In 2024, Jamaica recorded a preliminary maternal mortality ratio of 133 per 100,000 live births, a sustained decline from 211.3 per 100,000 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 calls for reducing the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030.

The guidelines were created through rigorous literature reviews, expert collaboration, and multiple rounds of edits to ensure clarity, applicability, and alignment with international standards. They will be periodically updated as new evidence emerges, ensuring Jamaica’s maternal health services remain current and effective.

The ceremony, which also involved the participation of paediatricians, neonatal nurses, and midwives, featured the launch of a newly revised Policies, Procedures and Protocols Manual for Neonatal Care Units too — the first comprehensive update to the guidebook in twenty years.

The handover of the emergency obstetrics protocols comes on the heels of the Ministry’s post-hurricane Maternal Health Outreach which targeted parishes hardest-hit by Hurricane Melissa. More than 500 pregnant and lactating mothers were reached with a suite of health services, including health checks, psychosocial counselling and ultrasound sonography.

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