

HEALTH HERALD

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**WHEN CARE GOES BEYOND THE CLINIC:
BRINGING SMILES WHERE IT MATTERS MOST**

STORY on PAGE 4

2,700+ cared for by Ark Silk Road



As part of continued efforts to strengthen access to healthcare following Hurricane Melissa, the Ministry of Health & Wellness welcomed the arrival of the Ark Silk Road hospital ship, which completed a two-week medical mission across Jamaica.

The vessel, which arrived from the People's Republic of China, docked at the Montego Bay Freeport and marked another milestone in bilateral cooperation in health.

On Thursday, December 4, 2025, a Ministry delegation conducted an official tour of surgical theatres, diagnostic suites, and fully equipped pharmacy.

The vessel was staffed with more than 100 medical professionals, including doctors, nurses, pharmacists, technicians, and support personnel. It provided a wide range of services at no cost to the public. These included general consultations, specialist care, diagnostic testing, screenings, and support to reduce the backlog of elective surgeries.

The mission operated on a rotating schedule across three locations: Montego Bay, Kingston, and Falmouth, ensuring residents in western, central, and eastern Jamaica benefited from the additional clinical capacity. The initiative was particularly timely, as several healthcare facilities in the western region were significantly impacted by Hurricane Melissa.

Minister of Health & Wellness, Dr the Hon. Christopher Tufton, CD, MP, noted that, "This visit aligned with ongoing efforts to strengthen access to healthcare, improve community wellness, and provide Jamaicans with additional avenues for medical assistance after many healthcare facilities in the West were severely impacted by Hurricane Melissa."

The Ministry expressed appreciation for the medical team and encouraged members of the public to register at the nearest hospital or health centre in parishes where services were offered.



Electronic Immunization Registry Marks New Chapter in Healthcare



The Ministry of Health & Wellness has taken another significant step towards strengthening Jamaica's public health system with the official handover of the Electronic Immunization Registry (EIR) at the St. Ann's Bay Health Centre. The facility is among 18 pilot sites islandwide marking the start of a new, digitally driven approach to immunisation services.

Speaking at the ceremony, Dr. Christopher Tufton, Minister of Health & Wellness, described the moment as a turning point in the country's health journey. "Today is more than a handover ceremony; it is the unveiling of a future that is smarter, more resilient, and more responsive to the needs of our people who utilise the health services," he said.

The EIR forms part of the Ministry's wider push to modernise healthcare delivery while building resilience against disruptions such as natural disasters.

Reflecting on the impact of Hurricane Melissa, the Minister noted that damaged paper records highlighted the vulnerability of traditional systems and reinforced the urgency of digitisation.

By replacing manual immunisation records with a secure, centralised digital platform, the EIR enables real-time access to accurate data, supports faster decision-making, and improves continuity of care across both public and private health facilities. It also empowers patients and caregivers by providing reliable access to vaccination records for school registration, travel, and long-term health planning.

With support from partners including PAHO and the Government of Canada, the rollout of the EIR represents a major investment in Jamaica's health infrastructure, one that positions the country to deliver more responsive, equitable, and patient-centred care well into the future.

When Care Goes Beyond the Clinic: Bringing Smiles Where It Matters Most



In the weeks following Hurricane Melissa, the Ministry of Health & Wellness moved beyond immediate recovery efforts to focus on something just as meaningful—spreading hope, comfort, and Christmas cheer to children and families still feeling the impact of the storm.

Through a series of coordinated toy drives and outreach activities, the Ministry demonstrated that public health extends beyond facilities and services to include compassion, empathy, and human connection.

The Ministry supported at least three toy drives across affected communities, including a collaborative initiative with the Hummingbird Charity in Maggoty, St. Elizabeth, as well as distributions in the Retirement and Red Hills communities.

These activities were supported by members of the CARE CREW, the volunteer arm of the Ministry of Health & Wellness, whose time and commitment helped ensure that children in hard-hit areas experienced joy during the festive season despite ongoing challenges (see page 6).

At Bustamante Hospital for Children, Dr the Hon. Christopher Tufton, CD, MP, Minister of Health & Wellness, spent time with young patients and staff, assisting with the distribution of toys and sharing words of encouragement (see page 5).

The visit highlighted the importance of emotional wellbeing as a core component of holistic care, particularly for children spending the holidays in hospital.

Meanwhile, the Hon. Krystal Lee, MP, Minister of State in the Ministry of Health & Wellness, led teams at the Western Regional Health Authority in the distribution of the toys and maternal care packages. This outreach marked the sixth iteration of a post-hurricane maternal health initiative, reflecting her continued focus on supporting mothers, children, and families as part of her portfolio (see page 7).

Together, these efforts brought to life several of the Ministry's core values including: equity, collaboration and responsiveness, reaffirming its commitment to stand with communities, especially in moments when care and kindness are needed most.



MINISTRY OF
**HEALTH &
WELLNESS**

Security Bulletin

A Publication of the Security & Transportation Unit

Five Important Christmas Rules for Secure Online Shopping

Shop only on trusted, secure websites.

Always use reputable retailers and ensure the website uses HTTPS with a padlock symbol before entering payment details.

Avoid public Wi-Fi when shopping.

Do not make online purchases or enter card information while connected to public or shared Wi-Fi networks.

Use strong authentication and secure payment methods.

Enable two-factor authentication and use credit cards or trusted digital wallets for better fraud protection.

Be alert to phishing and fake Christmas deals.

Avoid clicking links from unsolicited emails, texts, or social media ads. Visit official websites directly.

Monitor transactions and keep records.

Turn on transaction alerts, review statements regularly, and save receipts and order confirmations.



CHRISTMAS CHEER AT BUSTAMANTE HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN



CARE CREW AND HUMMINGBIRD CHARITY: DELIVERING JOY



MATERNAL HEALTH CHRISTMAS OUTREACH – WESTERN REGION



Staff Spotlight

Candice Edwards

#PeopleInHealth

Name: Candice Kimonena Edwards

Job Title/Position: Programme Officer – Adolescent Health

Division/Department/Unit: Technical Services – HSPI, Family Health Unit

Core Function:

I support the development and implementation of programmes that improve adolescent health and wellbeing in Jamaica through advocacy, partnerships, resource mobilisation, and alignment with Ministry of Health and Wellness priorities.

Vision for the Ministry of Health & Wellness:

I envision healthcare facilities that are inclusive and adolescent-friendly, with modern design, clear signage, privacy, and disability-friendly features that allow young people to access care comfortably and with dignity.

What I Enjoy About My Job:

I enjoy the continuous learning and innovation in adolescent health, and the fulfilment that comes from improving access to youth-friendly services and supportive environments across Jamaica.

High School Attended:

Marymount High School

Favourite Childhood Memory:

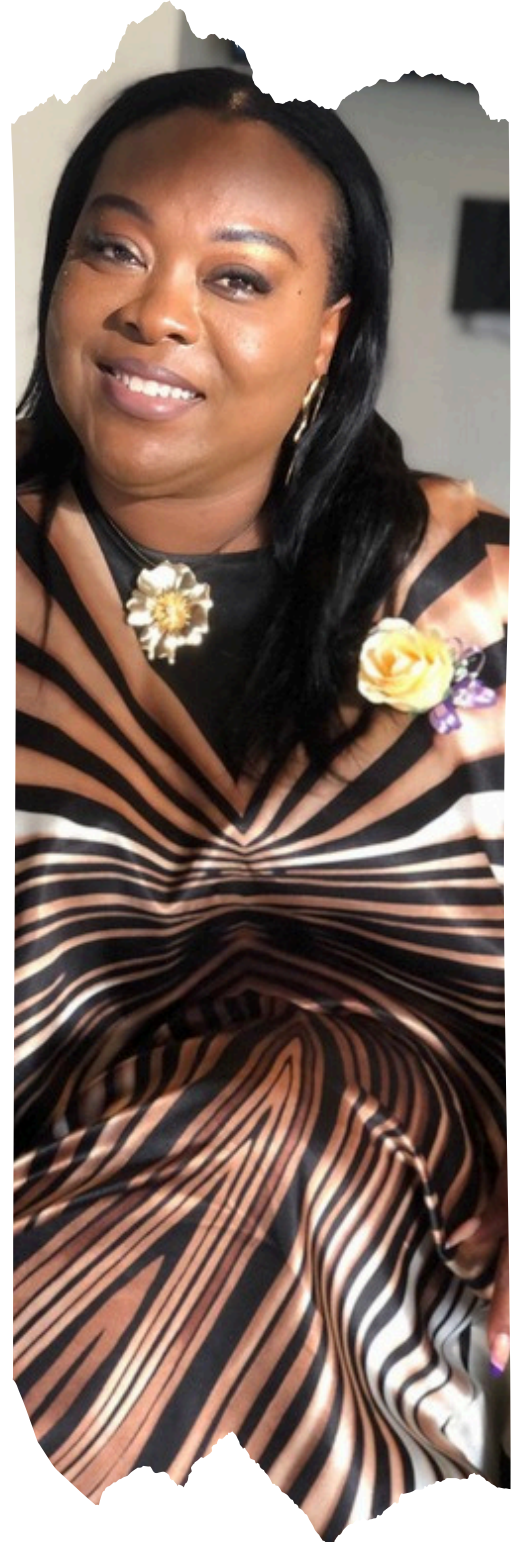
Playing “school” with neighbourhood children using a chalkboard my father built for me, which inspired my love for teaching and leadership.

Favourite Colour:

Purple

Dream Vacation:

Taking my parents on a cruise so we can relax, explore, and spend meaningful time together.



CREBITS:

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