



PRESS RELEASE

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Attention: All News Editors/Reporters

Health Minister addresses administrative performance and accountability shortcomings

KINGSTON, Jamaica. Tuesday, May 12, 2026: Speaking in Parliament on Tuesday (May 12), Minister of Health & Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, CD, MP, addressed the administrative performance and accountability issues in public health that have been highlighted in recent times. This he said has prompted a focused policy response in three critical areas, namely, governance and oversight, financial and procurement accountability, and capacity and performance management across the health portfolio.

The Minister said that all Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) will be required to bring their financial statements and reports tabled in Parliament fully up to date within the next 12 months. Additionally, health professional Councils will be required to submit action plans to regularise their financial reporting and to clear at least 10% of their outstanding backlog. The Ministry itself should be fully current with its appropriation accounts, in compliance with the Financial Administration and Audit (FAA) Act.

"Madam Speaker, we are fully mindful of the constitutional separation between policy, administration, and operations, and of the statutory roles of Boards under the PBMA Act. For the next 12 to 18 months, we will establish and monitor for implementation a series of steps to correct and improve our internal systems of governance oversight to ensure that accountability systems work as intended and deliver transparency, responsiveness, and lawful decision-making," noted Dr. Tufton.

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A comprehensive legislative review of the health governance framework, including the Health Services Act and the UHWI Act, will be undertaken this year, consistent with the UHWI Institutional Review Committee Report and Ministry's Vision for Health 2030 Plan. Further, from Monday, June 1, 2026, all Internal Audit Units will submit reports directly to the Ministry, which will inform the Minister's quarterly oversight meetings with Board Chairpersons.

In relation to procurement, the Minister noted that the overreliance on direct contracting presents a significant governance risk. Accordingly, from Monday, June 1, 2026, and for a period of 12 months, all direct contracting above statutory thresholds, except at the National Health Fund, will require independent validation.

At the same time all agencies will transition fully to the Performance Management and Appraisal System (PMAS) within 12 months, with at least 70% of organisational functions assessed under PMAS. Entities in health are also to implement a coordinated recruitment initiative to fill critical fiduciary and governance vacancies, with at least 70% of identified vacancies filled within 12 months.

"Accountability has no meaning if it is not reflected in the patient experience. Therefore, A Client-Centred, Rights-Based approach to service delivery is being advanced, supported by measurable service standards and satisfaction metrics, and reinforced by transparent public reporting," the Minister added.

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