



March 2019

## Over 300 Persons Access Free Medical Care



With the cost of health care rising beyond the reach of many Jamaicans, residents in the rural farming community of Mile Gully, Manchester, turned up at the Mile Gully Primary School to take advantage of the free services offered at a health and information fair recently. The fair was sponsored by Jamalco in collaboration with the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA).

Over 300 persons benefitted from the health and information fair, which offered a wide range of medical tests, including pap smear, prostate test, HIV test, dental care, blood sugar and cholesterol tests. Of the 300 persons who saw the doctor, there were 17 children and two toddlers. Some residents were also referred to seek follow-up treatment at the Mile Gully Clinic and Mandeville Hospital, while some were recommended to do additional diagnostic tests.

Subsidies valued at \$3000 were given to some 100 persons who were prescribed drugs based on the findings of their medical assessments, but could not afford to pay for their medicines.

Local Farmer, Eustace Palmer, who was visiting the doctor to get his foot examined after hitting it on a bike said that he was happy that he could see the doctor free of cost. Palmer explained that he had been unable to work for some three weeks because of the pain he was experiencing in his foot.

“The doctor check out mi foot and say mi need to go to the Mandeville Hospital right a way, so mi glad mi never make this opportunity pass me by,” he said.



2

A team of dentists from the University of Technology also conducted dental checks. Fifty-two persons benefitted from the services and received free cleanings and fillings. Extractions were also carried out on persons whose cavities could not be repaired with fillings.

Several government and private agencies used the health fair as a forum to disseminate information about their products and services, as well as distribute product samples. Among

the agencies present were the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA), the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Social Development Commission (SDC), Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA), Geoland, Mead Johnson, Heart Trust NTA, and the

Manchester Health Department. Representatives from Jamalco's Legal Department and Employee Assistance Programme were also on hand to provide legal advice and offer counselling services to those who needed it.

In support of the Jamaica Moves initiative, there was also an aerobics session led by Jamalco Fitness Instructor, Paul Surgeon, who took the participants through a series of gruelling exercises.

The Mile Gully Health and Information fair is the first of four health fairs planned by Jamalco to cater to the medical needs of residents living in its operating areas in Clarendon and Manchester. The next health fair will be held at the Farm Community Centre in South Manchester on June 12.

**Photos:**

- 1. Nurse Julie Bailey conducts a blood pressure test for Constable Azan Gayle from the Cottage Police Station.*
- 2. A community member accesses the services of Geo-Land Title Ltd.*