

Massive Investment in Improving Healthcare Delivery

THE GOVERNMENT is undertaking a multi-billion-dollar upgrade of the country's health sector to provide state-of-the-art facilities to serve the population.

The investment, which entails construction and rehabilitation of hospitals and clinics, is the most significant build-out of the public health infrastructure since Independence in 1962.

It will improve access and quality of care, ensuring that the Jamaican healthcare system has the capacity to respond to a rapidly changing health environment, an ageing population, and high levels of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), which are responsible for over 70 per cent of all deaths in Jamaica.

Work on 13 facilities, comprising three hospitals and 10 health centres, is being executed under the Health Systems Strengthening Programme, which is being funded through support by the European Union (EU) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

The hospitals are Spanish Town, St. Ann's Bay, and

May Pen, while the health centres are Greater Portmore, Old Harbour, St. Jago Park, St. Ann's Bay, Ocho Rios, Brown's Town, May Pen West, Mocho, May Pen East, and Chapelton Community Hospital.

A total of US\$148 million has been allocated for the Health Systems Strengthening Programme, to which the Government of Jamaica has committed US\$87 million.

Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, broke ground for the redevelopment of the 430-bed Spanish Town Hospital in January.

The renovation works, valued at some \$5.5 billion, will see the building of a state-of-the-art, six-storey facility spanning more than 17,000 square metres.

As a result, patient care delivery at the facility will expand to new services, including urology, oncology, cardiology, gastroenterology, ophthalmology, and psychiatry.

It will be equipped with cutting-edge technology, including electronic access to patient medical records.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (third left) breaks ground for the University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI) Redevelopment Project at the institution's premises in Mona, St. Andrew on February 20. He is joined by Minister of Education and Youth, Hon. Fayval Williams (second left); Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (third right) and other stakeholders.

Cornwall Regional Hospital Redevelopment

THE MASSIVE upgrading of the healthcare sector under the Health Systems Programme is in addition to the renovations at several public health facilities including the Cornwall Regional Hospital at an estimated cost of \$21.4 billion.

"As an administration, we decided to make a massive investment, [in the Cornwall Regional Hospital] the

equivalent of literally rebuilding the building, that's the level of investment that we have put in place. We are in the final phase of the development and from what I am seeing, the building has been restored to

The University (UHWI) is also being redeveloped at a cost \$3 billion.

better than its original conditions.

"There will be more modern services and facilities offered. There is no question that it will be a credit to our health system and our people in and around this region who will benefit," said Prime Minister Holness.

Adjacent to the Cornwall Regional Hospital will be a new Adolescent Children's

Hospital, being built at a cost of \$5 billion, which will provide advanced care to benefit children in western parishes and the entire Jamaica.

The University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI) is also being redeveloped at a cost of \$3 billion with a \$278-million contract signing and ground-breaking ceremony for phase one of the project on February 20.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (centre) points to work being done at Cornwall Regional Hospital during a tour of the facility.

Electronic Records System



Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (left), looks keenly at information generated by the Electronic Health Records (EHR) System, which has been implemented at the May Pen Hospital in Clarendon. The Minister is assisted by nurse in charge of the Outpatient Department at the hospital, Diana Reid West.

ALONG WITH the infrastructure development, the Government is spending US\$5 million to enhance service delivery through the roll-out of an Electronic Health Records (EHR) System.

May Pen Hospital in Clarendon is the first to benefit from the fully digitised platform, which was launched at the facility in January.

The EHR provides an electronic version of a patient's medical history, including demographics, progress notes, diagnosis, medications, vital signs, past medical history, immunisations, laboratory data and radiology reports.

It provides a seamless interface for critical diagnostic imaging that will enable

health care professionals to see x-rays and computed tomography (CT) scans on computers and tablets provided within the facilities.

The EHR is expected to reduce patient wait time, increase service satisfaction levels, reduce cost in providing services, and increase productivity.

Meanwhile, hundreds of new physician posts were created in the health sector last year as the Government put measures in place to strengthen healthcare delivery.

At the primary level, in excess of 100 new posts were implemented and more than 600 at the secondary level. In addition, 250 posts have been created for specialist training.

Health Centres Get Major Upgrade

SEVERAL MAJOR upgrades were undertaken at health facilities in 2023. These include the \$26 million refurbishing works at the Moneague Health Centre in St. Ann to benefit 32,000 patients upgrading works at the Mandeville Comprehensive Health Centre in Manchester to offer improved services; and the facility's

retrofitting with additional safety features to make it more resilient to natural disasters. Additionally, the Cambridge Health Centre in St. James was renovated by the National Health Fund (NHF) at a cost of more than \$60 million and now benefits some 4,000 residents in that community and its environs.

A new \$29-million energy-efficient boiler system was also installed at the Savanna-la-Mar Public Hospital in Westmoreland.

The Black River Hospital in St. Elizabeth was equipped with a \$37-million digital retrofit system, while a mammogram machine was installed at the UHWI at a cost of \$47 mil-

lion and the renal unit of the Kingston Public Hospital received 10 new haemo-dialysis machines valued at over \$30 million.

In addition, the UHWI received 18 patient monitors valued \$25 million, while the Bustamante Hospital for Children got a new C-arm and laparoscopy machines at a cost of \$46 million.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (seated, second right) and Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (seated, second left), sign the contract to mark the \$5.5 billion investment in infrastructural upgrades under the Health Systems Strengthening

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