

JN donates millions to aid prevention of violent, road-traffic injuries

THE JAMAICA National Building Society Foundation has boosted the progress of the University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI) Data Mapping Project in the sum of \$6.8 million.

The project, which is in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the Violence Prevention Alliance and Mona GeoInformatics, will, among other things, seek to chart and analyse the burden of violence and motor vehicle-related injuries on hospital services across the island, with emphasis on the UHWI.

Additionally, the mapping will identify geographic areas which have a higher concentration of incidents to allow for prevention programmes to target those specific areas.

The trends collated will be based on hospital injury data over a five-year period, between 2005 and 2009; and the survey will also provide a profile of injuries by age, gender, nature and location of injury incidence.



FERGUSON

Speaking at the signing of the agreement, Minister of Health Dr Fenton Ferguson expressed gratitude for the monetary support received from the JN Foundation. Excited by the

prospects of the projects, Ferguson said the findings from the project should reduce the strain on the critical service sector.

“From all indications, violence-related injuries cost the Government of Jamaica about \$2 billion annually, which has a negative impact on the health system,” the health minister stated.

“You will find that other persons who go to the hospital for medical attention suffer lengthy delays, as a result of the strain that violence-related injuries cause on hospital staff. I’m extremely excited about this project.”

He also expressed optimism about the results of the study being used as a guide to mitigate the occurrences of violence-related and road-traffic injuries, in areas that are considered hotspots.

“The study will help the ministry to identify communities that are most affected by these injuries; and will allow us to allocate our already-limited resources to communities that need it the most,” he said.

“Having this data will help us to create appropriate policy framework to improve the sector. For instance, the National Road Safety Council, among other stakeholders, will be able to use the data from the project to guide their work.”

Noting that a similar task was conducted four years ago by the UHWI, chief executive officer and medical chief of staff, Dr Trevor McCartney, said the project, which involves seven hospitals across the island, will be extended to a 12-month period.

ACCURATE DATA COLLECTION

This, he explained, will facilitate more accurate data collection that will be ultimately used as a good reference source.

The other participating institutions will include Spanish Town, St Ann’s Bay, May Pen, Cornwall Regional and Mandeville hospitals, as well as the Bustamante Hospital for Children.

One of the major goals to be achieved is that the information gathered will facilitate the development of preventative programmes to mitigate incidents in specific geographic locations identified in the study.

“Preliminary data has indicated that there has been a significant loss of potential income from persons suffering violent injuries. These losses not only had serious repercussions on the individuals but also on their families,” said McCartney.

“Another ripple effect is the increased cost that occurs to institution. When one person becomes injured, the result is multifactorial and multidisciplinary. The enormous money it costs and the potential loss of income is severe, not to mention the indirect costs associated with these crashes.”

In reaffirming JN Foundation’s commitment to aligning itself with programmes that “will bring about real change,” General Manager Saffrey Brown noted the importance of carrying out the Data Mapping Project.

“For instance, we partnered with Mona GeoInformatics and JN General Insurance Company to map top crash hotspots across Jamaica, based on data collected over the last decade. And, as a result, crashes have gone down in the vicinity of these identified crash spots,” she stated.

Brown declared that, “This is a very interesting project. And it is hoped that it will result in finding possible solutions that will help the Ministry of Health decrease the cost associated with dealing with crash-related injuries.”

The official signing of the funding agreement between the JN Foundation and the University of the West Indies Hospital took place on December 11, 2013 at the Ministry of Health.