

Health minister to pursue smoking ban

Health Minister Rudyard Spencer has signaled that he is to take a bill to Parliament, which will see to a ban on smoking in public places.

The Opposition and members of the medical fraternity have chided the Government for its delay in enacting the legislation.

They have noted that Jamaica is in breach of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Use, to which the country is a signatory.

But Spencer said the proposed legislation has now been drafted, and has been submitted to the Cabinet for deliberation.

He said the smoking ban bill forms a part of the health ministry's campaign to promote a healthy lifestyle.

The health minister noted that limiting smoking in both public and private business places would help protect non-smokers from second and third-hand effects.

Some of the main smoking-related medical complications are lung cancer, asthma irritation, and increased risk of heart disease.

Based on studies, 80 to 90 per cent of lung cancer cases and 30 per cent of heart disease cases have been linked to smoking.