

## Mental Health Week to Focus on Depression

The Ministry of Health will be observing Mental Health Week from October 7 to 14, with focus on the problem of depression.

Depression is a common mental disorder that is usually characterised by a state of low mood and an aversion to positive activity, which causes severe sadness, lack of concentration, physical restlessness, low productivity, headaches, and loss of appetite. Director of Child and Adolescent Mental Health at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Judith Leiba, said this year's observance, under the theme: "Depression: A Global Crisis", will seek to raise awareness about depression, which can greatly impede an individual's productivity and contribution to development. She informed that a week of activities has been organised in all four health regions in the island. Governor General, His Excellency The Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen, read the proclamation on Thursday to mark the week during a ceremony at King's House; and a series of thanksgiving services will be held on Saturday (Oct. 6) and on Sunday (Oct. 7) at various churches across the island. Activities in the Kingston and St. Andrew region include a float parade, unveiling of a billboard at Maxfield Park, depression screenings at malls and plazas, health promotion, and education talks. The week will be highlighted by two conferences – one on World Mental Health Day, Wednesday (Oct. 10) at the Jamaica Conference Centre, downtown Kingston; and the other on Sunday (Oct. 14) at Wexford Hotel in Montego Bay. Issues to be examined at the conferences are: 'Depression in children'; 'The economic impact of depression'; 'Depression in a recession'; 'Depression in chronic diseases and the elderly'; 'Depression in care givers of the mentally ill'; and Counselling tips in depression. Interested persons can contact the health authorities to obtain information about the activities that are being held in their respective communities. Dr. Leiba is urging all Jamaicans to take charge of their mental health and that of their children, and, to visit a general practitioner or psychiatrist if any symptom of depression arises. Source:JIS