

## Jamaica Not on Malaria Alert

The Ministry of Health has responded to reports in the local media about the detection of a malaria case in the island.

In a release, Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Michael Coombs pointed out that Jamaica is not in a Malaria outbreak and therefore not on alert for the disease. The country has had no locally transmitted cases of malaria since 2009. There were five imported cases in 2012 and one imported case since 2013. With respect to the imported case of malaria that was reported in the media Friday (January, 11, 2013), Dr. Coombs explained that the Ministry has been managing the patient according to World Health Organization guidelines. "Our public health team has visited the community to check persons with whom the patient had contact. The Ministry is also continuing its routine surveillance which will allow us to be in a position to quickly identify and treat persons if the need arises," Dr. Coombs stated. Malaria, caused by the malaria parasite (not a virus), is spread when the Anopheles mosquito bites an infected person and then bites others. There is no direct person to person transmission. Symptoms include fever, chills, headache, muscle aches and fatigue. Nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea are also possible. Persons are urged to continue efforts to destroy mosquito breeding sites and protect themselves from mosquito bites. Meanwhile, the Chief Medical Officer is reminding persons to check with the Ministry of Health or their Parish Health Department before they travel to ensure that they take the necessary health related precautionary measures. There are some countries for which persons need certain vaccines or prophylaxis before they travel. "We are urging persons to check with us if they are not sure about the requirements for a particular country. This is important to prevent illness and the spread of certain diseases among our population," Dr. Coombs said. Contact: MOH, Public Relations Unit Tel: 967-1561