

## Children in rural areas with chronic kidney disease (CKD) benefit from training for paediatric staff

Over the years Jamaica's paediatric nephrologists (kidney specialists for children) recognized that many children with chronic kidney disease (CKD) default from their clinic visits because they simply can't pay the bus fare to travel to Kingston.

In July 2012 Jamaica Kidney Kids Foundation Ltd (JKKFL) was launched and established that one of its goals would be to improve the care of children with CKD by ensuring specialist care is available in local hospitals from the paediatricians serving outside of Kingston. On October 5 and 6, JKKFL spearheaded a 2-day workshop with support from the International Paediatric Nephrology Association (IPNA), the Issa Trust and Couples Resorts. The workshop which opened with an address by Hon. Dr. Fenton Ferguson, Minister of Health, was attended by 20 paediatricians and paediatric residents from 10 hospitals across the island, namely – Cornwall Regional, Savanna-la-mar, St. Ann's Bay, Mandeville Regional, May Pen, Spanish Town, Princess Margaret, Annotto Bay, Bustamante Children's Hospital (BCH) and the University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI). Paediatric staff were trained in the diagnosis and treatment of children with chronic disease and given guidelines to facilitate communication and shared management with the 3 Kingston-based paediatric nephrologists. These protocols will minimize the need for children to travel to Kingston while maintaining quality CKD care. JKKFL organized follow-up outreach to hospitals where visiting faculty lectured on CKD and topics related to childhood kidney disease to audiences of 30-40 doctors, nurses, and medical students in each venue. The team visited Cornwall Regional Hospital and St. Ann's Bay Hospitals on Monday October 7th and the UHWI on Tuesday October 8th. The hospitals presented children with difficult kidney problems for discussion and advice from the team of paediatric nephrologists. This was followed by tours of the paediatric wards and the dialysis units at Cornwall Regional Hospital and UHWI. May Pen and Mandeville Regional Hospitals hosted the team on October 9th and the visit culminates today (October 10) with a visit to the Bustamante Children's Hospital.

The team comprises five paediatric nephrologists including Jamaica's three local paediatric nephrologists (Dr. Joy Williams at BCH, Dr Maolynne Miller and Dr. Marsha Gooden at UHWI). Visiting paediatric nephrologists are Dr. Martin Bitzan from Montreal Children's Hospital in Canada, Dr. Melvin Bonilla-Felix from the University of Puerto Rico and Dr. Pat Brophy from the University of Iowa. Through the work of JKKFL, there will now be 20 trained paediatricians and paediatric residents with a communication template to facilitate distant care with Paediatric nephrology supervision for children living in rural areas with kidney disease. This programme will enable earlier detection and appropriate care of children with kidney disease. The workshop which was held at Couples Sans Souci received support from the Issa Trust Foundation, IPNA, and Couples Resorts. Other sponsors include Nestle, Abbot Pharmaceuticals and Mead Johnson who helped to cater the outreach visits.