

Gov't Continues to Invest Heavily in Health Sector

By [Garwin Davis](#) October 12, 2015

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Photo: JIS Photographer

Minister of Health, Hon. Dr. Fenton Ferguson, says Government continues to invest in the upgrading of health infrastructure and systems. He was addressing the official opening of the state-of-the-art Hospiten Montego Bay medical facility in Rosehall, St. James, on Thursday, October 8.

Story Highlights

Major improvements are coming for the health sector as the Government continues to invest in the upgrading of infrastructure and systems to provide first class health service to Jamaicans.

Health Minister, Hon. Dr. Fenton Ferguson, said that among the undertakings is the \$750 million Northwestern Trauma Project, which will create a health emergency and trauma network in the western end of the island from Negril to Ocho Rios.

He informed that funding for the project will be provided by the National Health Fund (NHF), the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, and the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF).

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Dr. Ferguson was speaking on Thursday (October 8) at the official opening of the state-of-the-art medical facility, Hospiten Montego Bay, in Cinnamon Hill, Rose Hall, St. James.

The Minister also noted that in May, a contract valued at US\$14.4 million was signed with the United States (US)-based Varian Medical Systems for the establishment of two cancer treatment centres, including employee training.

The facilities will be located at Cornwall Regional Hospital in St. James and the St. Joseph's Hospital in Kingston and will be equipped with linear accelerators, CT simulators, C-arm mobile X-ray units and brachytherapy machines (for treatment of cervical, prostate, breast and skin cancers).

"The National Health Fund is providing the bulk of the funds with a grant of US\$10 million," Dr. Ferguson informed.

He noted that the CHASE Fund has provided a grant of US\$4.5 million towards the initiative, while other partners, including the Vincent Hosang Family Foundation, have contributed US\$250,000.

The Health Minister said the Government is also taking steps to restructure health services in order to improve the quantum and quality of care available to all Jamaicans.

"Through Cabinet approval, we are moving forward with the Renewal of Primary Health Care Policy to help to realign the primary health care network and infrastructure to address the population shift," he said.

He noted further that the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has approved US\$250,000 for the development of a 10-year strategic plan for advancing health care services in Jamaica.

"We are now at a stage where we will shortly have a signing of the agreement to develop the 10-year strategy, which will be guided by a multi-sectoral group to be established," Dr. Ferguson informed.

"The group will provide guidance to the technical team, which will include external and local consultants with support from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and other agencies," he said.

The country's public health network comprises over 300 health centres and 24 hospitals.

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