

JADEP – Strong Support For The Elderly



With affordable medication being a necessity for many senior citizens in the country, the National Health Fund (NHF) is looking at how it can improve its Jamaica Drug for the Elderly Programme (JADEP) to meet the varying needs of beneficiaries.

Now in its 10th year, the administrators of the JADEP programme believe the review is a timely one and they are consulting with various stakeholders to see what improvements can be made.

Chief Executive Officer for the NHF Everton Anderson explained that about \$4.4 billion has been budgeted for the NHF and JADEP programmes, which both benefit the elderly.

There are currently 282,899 persons enrolled under the JADEP, which allows those over 60 years old to get subsidised medication for the 10 illnesses covered. A beneficiary can pay as little as \$40 for one drug to \$240 for six or more drugs.

"Within another few months, we will be rolling out some major improvements to the JADEP programme and just to say that discussions have been held with various stakeholders to include beneficiaries, private pharmacies that have been very instrumental in offering the service to say how we can all collaborate to make this a better

programme," said Anderson.

CRITICAL ASPECTS

"I wouldn't want to commit to what we are coming with, but just to say that the critical aspects are being looked at. For example, the basket of drugs, compensation of providers. Those are some of the issues that we are looking to make some changes to as we look at a revised JADEP model, because after so many years, certainly a review is essential at this time," added Anderson.

Senior citizen Pamela Francis, who has hypertension, arthritis and glaucoma, which are all covered under the JADEP programme, is adamant that it has made life easier for her. However, Francis is hoping that more drugs will become subsidised under the programme.

"I thank the Lord for the JADEP because it help me like when I have to get my blood pressure pill," said the 68-year-old Francis, before adding, "I have eye problem, so I'm hoping and praying they would put on the eye drops."

Director of the Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre Professor Denise Eldemire-Shearer, who has been a staunch advocate for the elderly, told our news team that a number of senior citizens polled recently had complimentary things to say when asked about the programme.

SUBSIDISED DRUGS

"I have patients that bring the JADEP list to me and say to me please put these drugs first. If you can't manage with these, then give the others," she said.

"Successive government has continued to work with it. It has not become a football. It doesn't matter who brought it in, everybody looks to make it better," she noted.

Eldemire-Shearer cautioned administrators against merging the JADEP card with the NHF card, which allows anyone over 16 years old in Jamaica to get subsidised drugs to treat one or more of 16 chronic illnesses covered.

"They both serve two different purposes. We need both of them, we don't need them to merge into one because that JADEP, which is where you are only paying the \$40 for the prescription fee, meets the needs of a certain sector of our older society," said Eldemire-

Shearer.

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