

Caribbean Medical Mission committed to saving lives in Jamaica

Contributed by Sharon Parris-Chambers
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The Caribbean Medical Mission, headed by Dr. Rudolph Willis has been serving the Caribbean since 1996, bringing medical expertise and supplies to the needy. The mission, which began in Jamaica, has grown rapidly since six physicians and three nurses travelled to Kingston to treat the needy ten years ago.

Today, the Caribbean Medical Mission is 80 members strong with 40 of those multi-disciplinary doctors.

Dr. Rudolph Willis, Dr. Robert Clarke
and Winston Wellington at the launch of
the Caribbean Medical Mission.

The medical mission's visit to Jamaica was in association with Travellers Beach Resort and Negril Education Environmental Trust (NEET).

Dr. Saunders waiting for his next patient
at the Lucea Clinic

Dr. Willis explained the organization's commitment to Jamaica in this way: "It is our intention to send two missions to the Caribbean per year, of which Jamaica is one. We have 19 boxes of medications and one wheelchair for this mission (October 2006). Any left over medications will be donated to the hospitals and clinics in the parishes served."

The scaled down medical team of four doctors, specializing in family practice and six nurses visited Western Jamaica October 17- 24, 2006, serving the needy in Lucea at Hano Car Park, Negril at the Negril Clinic and Petersfield Clinic in Savanna la Mar. A total of 650 patients were treated. Doctors Rudolph Willis, Robert Clarke, Berman Saunders, and Charles Anderson comprised the medical team of doctors.

Sharon Addison, registered nurse recounts an experience while the medical team was at the Petersfield Clinic on October 19. She said that a sick elderly patient was brought in by her relative to have her blood sugar tested. The patient's blood sugar was so high; it did not even register on the charts. Christine Sonlin Administrative Assistant, with Travellers Beach Resort, and local coordinator of the medical mission, volunteered to drive the patient to Savanna la Mar hospital as there was no emergency vehicle available to do so. This act of kindness, helped to save the life of an elderly woman.

Dr. Willis advised Jamaicans to visit their doctors once a year for check ups and if they are 40 -50 yrs. old with hypertension or diabetes, up to four times a year. In addition, Dr. Saunders, diagnosed a number of young female with sexually transmitted diseases, he said that they were unaware of their condition. He cautioned the youth to engage in safe sex practices and to have their partners treated. Further, he encouraged the males who are slow to come to the doctor to "change the quality of your life, if you come for regular check ups and treat diseases early; you can live longer."

The Rotary Club of Lucea assisted with the Lucea clinic arrangements and provided hospitality as did the Negril Rotary Club.

The medical team plans to return to Jamaica in March or April 2007 and promises to have a full complement of doctors, including ophthalmologists, gynecologists, a chiropractor and dentists.