



MINISTRY OF  
**HEALTH &  
WELLNESS**



## **NORTH-EAST REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY (NERHA)**

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

**2025 February 05**

#### **For Immediate Release**

The North-East Regional Health Authority (NERHA), in response to recent media publication regarding issues at the Annotto Bay Hospital (ABH), St Mary, wishes to provide the following updates and clarifications for the public's attention: -

#### **HUMAN RESOURCE CHALLENGES & STRATEGIES**

1. The ABH, similar to other public health facilities across the island, faces challenges in filling vacancies for consultant medical officers and specialist nurses. To alleviate this, ongoing strategies and efforts to identify and recruit these skillsets continue through aggressive advertisement via all media platforms and the NERHA website ([www.nerha.gov.jm](http://www.nerha.gov.jm)). The limited number of graduates from the educational institutions and high attrition rates impact the region's ability to identify suitable candidates for recruitment and selection. Notwithstanding, plans in place to ensure patients' access to the services are implemented.

#### **INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE**

With the hospital's upgrade to type B in 2023 April, significant strategic efforts have been made and are ongoing to upgrade the hospital's infrastructure to meet the service deliverables. Some of these include:

1. Comprehensive upgrade to the electrical system at a value of Four Hundred Million Dollars (J\$400M), which is in progress.
2. Construction of a new building and procurement of equipment to relocate Laboratory Services, introduce Blood Bank Services and expand Physiotherapy Services is near completion and is being implemented at an approximate value of Two Hundred and Eighty Million Dollars (J\$280M).
3. The expansion of the Paediatric Ward and Construction & Equipping of a twenty (20) cot Special Care Nursery to care for neonates was recently completed at a value of Two Hundred and Sixty-Seven Million Dollars (J\$267M) and is operational.

Additionally, design works to expand the Maternity Ward with an attending Operating Theatre and Delivery Suites, upgrade and expand the Sewage Treatment Plant, and construct and equip an

Accident & Emergency and Outpatient Departments are complete and awaiting discussions and decisions on implementation strategies.

### **EQUIPMENT & PLANT MAINTENANCE**

Currently, the maintenance of all major equipment at the hospital is outsourced to qualified service contractors. This, however, does not prevent a piece of equipment from malfunctioning. In these instances, plans are executed to outsource the requisite service or transfer patients to health facilities (inter or intra-regional health authorities) to ensure continuity of care until the situation is remedied.

- a. More specifically, the hospital's X-ray machine malfunctioned on January 31, 2025, and the service provider is expected to complete the repairs on February 07, 2025. In the interim, patients requiring X-ray services are being transferred to the Port Maria Hospital at no cost to them.
- b. The HVAC system in the Operating Theatre (OT) malfunctioned on January 11, 2025. Both suites were fully functional on January 24, 2025, and the service provider ensured one OT suite was operational during the period. The hospital management has since indicated the need for additional maintenance interventions in the OT suites and a meeting will be convened to discuss how this will be implemented.

The NERHA maintains that all reasonable efforts to deliver and enhance patient care at the ABH, St Mary, as well as our other health facilities, are at the top of our strategic priorities and operational efforts, and these processes involve the sensitization and involvement of all senior management personnel.

We further maintain that ongoing efforts have been demonstrated to improve the offering and delivery of healthcare services at the ABH. The ABH now has an increased staff cadre and is offering additional health services, which is an improvement on what existed before.

NERHA assures the public that the well-being and care of all clients who access its health facilities are of significant importance. We will continue our efforts to improve these services with the involvement of our valued stakeholders.

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