

South East Regional Health Authority

Regional Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Joint Statement from Chairman of SERHA and Senior Medical Officer of the Victoria Jubilee Hospital re Gleaner Article

The Gleaner article published on Sunday October 30, 2016 under the headline **‘Somebody Lied, 26 Babies Died’** is irresponsible, inaccurate and an absolute misrepresentation. Furthermore, the article seeks to undermine the integrity of the Ministry of Health, the committee formed to investigate the cluster cases of GBS related deaths and healthcare professionals at the Victoria Jubilee Hospital.

The committee report which was issued to the media and posted online, fully disclosed the following facts:

- Monthly neonatal deaths between the period January - September 2016 ,which showed 29 neonatal deaths between the months of August - September 2016 (page 8)
- Of the 29 neonatal deaths, 4 were confirmed to be death by GBS infection (page 1)

To further explain the deaths over the July - September 2016 period, note below:

July 2016

578 Live births

12 neonates died

Cause of death for 12 neonates, determined by the medical team were as follows:

- 11 complications of prematurity

Board of Directors: Mr. Phillip Armstrong (Chairman); Ms. Maureen Golding (Regional Director); Dr. Dutris Bourne (Regional Technical Director); Miss. Jacqueline Ellis, (CEO Actg, KPH/VJH); Dr. Natalie Whyllie (Senior Medical Officer Actg., KPH); Mr. Phillip Henriques, Mrs. Lisa A. Soares Lewis; Ms. Belinda Williams, Ms. Carolyn Chuck, Dr. Norman Dunn (Vice Chairman); Mr. Peter Jervis; Dr. Patrece Charles-Freeman, Councillor Owen Palmer, Mrs. Marva Lawson Byfield



- 1 congenital heart disease
- *None of these deaths were confirmed as a result of GBS or conditions within the hospital

August 2016

652 Live births

11 neonates died

Cause of death for 11 neonates, determined by the medical team were as follows:

- 3 complications of birth related to no oxygen flow to the brain
 - 1 born without a brain
 - 7 complications of prematurity
- * None of these deaths were confirmed as a result of GBS or conditions within the hospital

September 2016

745 Live births

18 neonates died

Cause of death for 18 neonates, determined by the medical team were as follows:

- 4 directly related to GBS
- 10 complications of prematurity
- 1 congenital abnormality
- 1 severe respiratory complications

The above stated facts from the report issued by the committee established by the Ministry of Health, clearly show that while 29 neonates lost their lives between August to September 2016, 4 were directly related to GBS and not the suggested 26 in the mentioned article.



While, we understand that there are many challenges within the health sector, we continue to aim for high standards and are committed to having a fully transparent process in all cases. All lives are important and as such, all neonatal deaths are investigated.

By way of this response, we want to also urge and encourage all journalists to thoroughly investigate matters before publishing as it sends the wrong signal and further contributes to the undermining of the health sector. Furthermore, it is irresponsible and unfair to the professionals within the health sector who continue to work under challenging circumstances.

We have and will always be open to discussion on matters of public interest, and for further clarification we can be contacted at the following:

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