



# ORAL HEALTH MONTH NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2 EDITION 3



## IN THIS ISSUE

PG.2: Special Needs at the Comprehensive Health Centre in Slipe Pen Road and Safe Oral Health Care

PG.3: How the Western Smiles were won. Smiles for Generations

PG. 4 : Empowering our Women

PG.5: Continued Professional Development – Keeping the team current and updated.



### AMAZING SMILES

The Amazing Smiles team in Zones 2 & 5 in Kingston & St. Andrew launched the Amazing Smiles for Special Needs In-reach programme; highlighting the fact that children and adolescents with Special Needs require safe and effective oral health care services. The team emphasized the importance of early screening (Caries Risk Assessment) and diagnosis, complemented by appropriate treatment involving the patients and their parents and /or caregivers. It is very important for these children to visit their Pediatric dentist and /or dental care provider routinely: to prevent any oral health problems and conditions, to establish a good relationship with the oral health team and to institute a dental home that would support and maintain good oral health for these children and their parents.

Children with Special Needs have the most unmet oral health care needs amongst the child cohort. However, many have difficulties accessing care due to behavioural and other developmental issues. Therefore, **preparation for the child's first visit is a critical aspect of their oral health care.** Parents or caregivers are encouraged to sensitize their children for their first dental visit. For example, showing them photos of the oral health team that he/she is going to meet, practicing how he/she will sit in the dental chair, opening the mouth to count his/her teeth, brushing the teeth, painting the teeth (with fluoride) to make them strong and **MOST OF ALL LETTING THEM SMILE AND BEING PROUD OF THEIR MOUTHS.**

### SAFE ORAL HEALTH CARE FOR ALL AGES

The COVID-19 pandemic has become synonymous with lock downs, curfews, quarantines, avoiding aerosol generating procedures in the dental practice and significant public health measures in every spheres of life. In the USA alone, early in the pandemic over 198,000 dental offices were closed. The Practice of dentistry in Jamaica was no exception as many dental practitioners scaled down their services to provide coverage **ONLY** for dental emergencies and urgent oral health care.

The dental profession prides itself in the practice of evidence-based dentistry and international oral health best practices, inclusive of good infection, prevention and control. Therefore, the Oral Health Team quickly adapted to the pandemic requirements for heightened Infection control measures, such as the use of air disinfection systems, N95 respirators, temperature checks, hand hygiene and remote triaging, to name a few. Thereby implementing safe and effective procedures for providing optimal and essential oral health services for our clients.

Oral health Month provided that framework for us to show case how safely and effectively oral health care can be delivered, while restoring smiles and trust, to our children and the most vulnerable individuals in our society. We are on a mission to deliver safe, effective and appropriate oral health care to those in need of care. **ORAL HEALTH CARE IS SAFE CARE.**



## SMILES FOR MANY GENERATIONS

It is often said that, “One sure way to prevent cavities in our children is by improving the oral health of our antenatal clients and /or pregnant women”.

Pregnancy can be a very delicate time in a woman’s life as issues such as pre-eclampsia, vomiting and hormonal changes among others can affect her oral health.

Every pregnant woman wants her pregnancy to be perfect and uneventful. In an attempt to make everything perfect, there are times, when a needed visit to the dentist is deferred. This can lead to certain oral health conditions not being diagnosed early enough and hence remain untreated, causing needless discomfort and pain in and during the pregnancy.

The Oral Health Team in the Ministry of Health & Wellness is therefore stating that Good Oral health is an important part of good prenatal care, given the fact that poor oral health during pregnancy can lead to poor health outcomes for the mother and baby.

So let us talk to your Oral health Care provider, when considering getting pregnant or if you are pregnant.



### HOW THE WESTERN SMILES WERE WON....

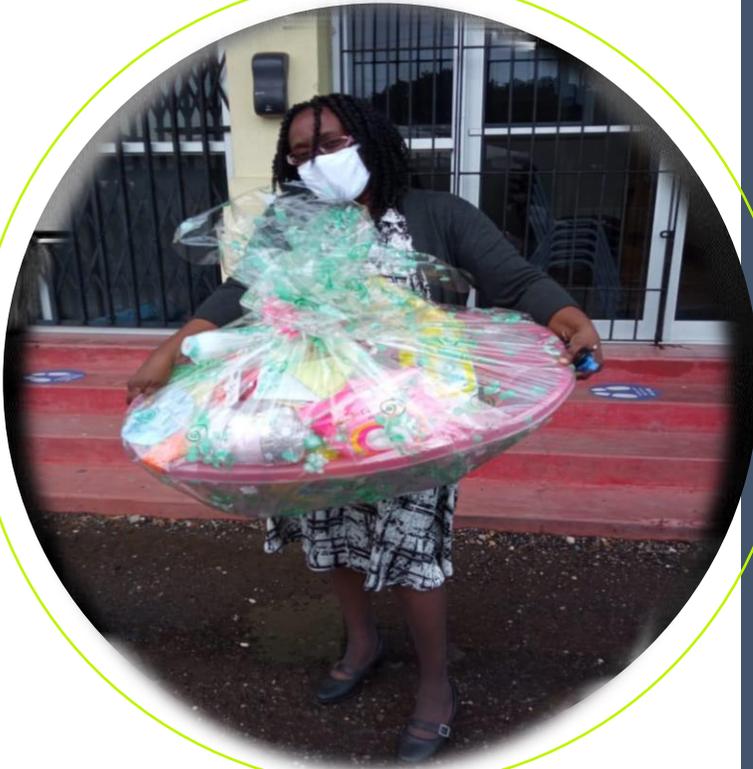
Smile builders in the Western Regional Health Authority – visited one of the Hermann Gmeiner SOS Children Village in St. James. Herman Gmeiner’s philosophical concept was that no child should grow up alone, hence the creation of a loving and nurturing environment for our Children.

Dental caries is the most prolific childhood disease. It is said to be more prevalent than hay fever or even the common cold. However, the data emanating from various peer review journals concur that untreated cavities can cause pain and infections, that may lead to significant health problems with eating, speaking, playing, and learning. Therefore, the Western Smile Builders went beyond the call of duty to attend to these children’s oral health need.

The good news is that cavities are preventable. Hence, armed with Fluoride varnishes, which prevent dental caries. The team went about delivering this safe and effective health technology to everyone, especially those most at risk for Dental caries. The planned intervention was strengthened through the incorporation of targeted Oral Health Educational sessions to the children and the caregivers at the facility.

The SOS family appreciated the efforts of our Smile Builders, as it truly lived up to Hermann Gmeiner’s philosophy of care to the least fortunate.



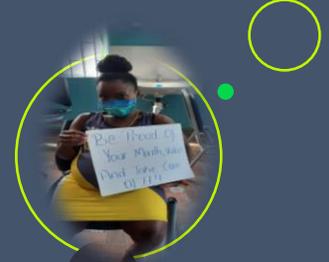


## EMPOWERING OUR WOMEN

The Public Oral health team has begun a drive to creatively “*upstream*” the National Paediatric Oral Health Programme, aimed at improving our children’s oral health status as an intermediate outcome. Our pregnant and lactating women will be the primary targets.

Empowering our women through oral health education and promotion is one-step closer to the desired goal. The women will attain the competencies and life changing skills geared at ensuring a lifetime of smiles for the entire family.

Starting in October 2021, Oral health teams across the island will be rewarding Antenatal women who attend oral health education sessions and have done at least one oral health procedure and /or a comprehensive assessment.



Pregnant women and their providers need more knowledge about the many changes that occur in the oral cavity during pregnancy



## CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Continuing professional development (CPD) is defined as a continued structured learning for dental practitioners, aimed to maintain, update or enhance knowledge, technical skills or professional clinical or behavioural standards, all of which can improve the provision of safe and effective oral healthcare to the public.

Under the Policy Framework for the “**Proper Maintenance of Professional Standards of Care**”, the Dental Council of Jamaica, mandates continuing professional development. The Dental Council stipulated that specific minimum continuing education hour shall be attained for each category of dental practitioners per biennium, in order to continue practicing dentistry in Jamaica.

By obtaining the prerequisite CE credits, dental practitioners will have gained and maintained – contemporaneous clinical and ethical knowledge and skills in order to continue the practice of safe, effective and high quality dentistry, at the highest standards of patient safety, whilst managing traditional as well as new and emerging challenges in oral health.

During the month of Oral Health Celebration, Optimum Trading Ltd and the Medical Protection Society (Dental Protection) graciously provided six continuing education credits, collectively. The topics covered were Infection, Prevention and Control in Dentistry (5 C.E) and Dental Ethics –Managing the difficult client (1 C.E).

Therefore, in the end, the National Smiles Builders had something to smile about...

