

## Hartford HealthCare And WISC Hosted Community Forum



Lancelot Gordon Jr.

The Hartford HealthCare and West Indian Social Club of Hartford Community Forum held on Monday, September 18, 2023 was a successful event.

The forum engaged residents and stakeholders in a meaningful dialog to discuss topics relating to health care disparities in North Hartford.

Mr. Greg Jones, vice president, Community Engagement, Hartford Hospital, hosted the event; featured guest speaker was Bimal Patel, senior vice president, Hartford HealthCare.

Jones introduced Mr. Patel and outlined the program for the discussions. He also recognized the chair of the West Indian Social Club, Ms. Beverly Redd and other representatives, and thanked them for their support in organizing the event.

Participants at the event raised several issues; for example, Violette Haldane, president of the West Indian Foundation expressed

the need for an urgent care facility and a pharmacy in North Hartford, and asked if the hospital has considered providing these services.

Another resident raised an issue as to whether the hospital would consider providing financial support for women who are cancer victims and have exhausted all their savings and experiencing financial hardships.

Jones was lauded for his foresight eight years ago and his constant raising concerns and challenges relating to disparities in the health care industry. He noted that Hartford Healthcare is committed to working with North Hartford neighborhood organizations to come up with solutions to eradicate disparities in health care.

He also cited this commitment in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was consummated between Hartford HealthCare and the University of West Indies in a partnership to provide resources and assistance to hospitals in Jamaica.

Mr. Patel was most gracious in highlighting his interests in working with the community, saying he was interested in not only addressing the issues and disparities, but doing something to resolve them. He indicated that the hospital is very involved in several community-based partnerships in North Hartford.

On the soft side, Patel discussed his love for cricket and his experiences in Pakistan working in health facilities with limited resources.

Patel indicated that Hartford Healthcare is constantly and actively working on solutions in the community to resolve health



Greg Jones (R), Hartford Healthcare Vice President Community Relations, introduces Bimal Patel (L), President Hartford Healthcare, to audience at WISC to discuss community health concerns and solicits input from area citizens

care disparities and in creating several partnerships and relationships to not only address but in place solutions to fix the problems related to health disparities and challenges resulting in meaningful solutions.

Jones concluded the two-hour conversation saying that this was one of many ongoing forums to come up with comprehensive solutions relevant to disparities in health care.

And he emphasized the fact that Hartford Hospital is located in an excellent geography in the Hartford area and well suited for working with the West Indian Social Club of Hartford.



Audience at WISC listens as Greg Jones facilitates discussion highlighting community health concerns.

## Connecticut's Minimum Wage Will Increase To \$15.69 In January Under First-Ever Economic Indicator Adjustment

*Beginning on January 1, 2024, Connecticut's Minimum Wage Becomes Indexed to the Employment Cost Index and Will Adjust Annually*

HARTFORD, CT) – Governor Ned Lamont announced that beginning on January 1, 2024, Connecticut's minimum wage will increase from the current rate of \$15.00 per hour to \$15.69 per hour

as a result of the state's first-ever economic indicator adjustment.

This newly enacted adjustment is required under a state law Governor Lamont signed in 2019 (Public Act 19-4), which

implemented five incremental increases in the minimum wage between 2019 and 2023, followed by future adjustments that are tied to the percentage change in the federal employment cost index.

Beginning on January 1, 2024, and twelve-month period ending on June occurring annually each January 1 30 of the preceding year. The law thereafter, the state's minimum wage requires the commissioner of the will be adjusted according to the U.S. Connecticut Department of Labor to Department of Labor's calculation of review this percentage change and the employment cost index for the

# Connecticut's Minimum Wage To Increase

*Continued from Page 1*

then announce any adjustments by October 15 of each year. The minimum wage adjustments become effective on the next January 1.

Connecticut Labor Commissioner Danté Bartolomeo reports that the employment cost index increased by 4.6% over the twelve-month period ending on June 30, 2023, accounting for a \$0.69 increase to the state's minimum wage that will become effective on January 1, 2024.

**Governor Lamont said,** "The minimum wage for many years remained stagnant, making existing pay disparities even worse and preventing hardworking families from obtaining financial security.

That is why several years ago I signed a bill into law enacting several increases in the minimum wage and then ultimately attaching it to federal economic indicators so that as the economy grows the wages of low-income workers can grow with it. This is a fair, modest increase and the money earned will be spent right back into our own economy and support local businesses."

**Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz said,** "For too long, while the nation's economy grew, the income of minimum wage workers stayed stagnant – worsening economic disparities.

Connecticut took steps to address this problem with a fair, gradual increase for workers and brought the minimum wage to \$15. Today, we mark another significant step in ensuring a fair, livable baseline of income for those who work as the state makes it's first-ever economic indicator adjustment. We will continue to do everything we can to improve the quality of life for all the residents who call Connecticut their home."

**Commissioner Bartolomeo said,** "This increase will benefit Connecticut's 160,000 to 200,000 minimum wage workers and help offset some of the effects of national economic challenges, such as higher energy costs and interest rates. I commend Governor Lamont and the legislature for enacting this important wage reform."

According to the Current Population Survey as calculated by the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, approximately 60% of minimum wage earners in Connecticut are women.

Moving forward under this new law, Connecticut workers and employers may anticipate announcements by October 15 of each year declaring the change in the minimum wage that will become effective on January 1 of the approaching year.



## 10-Year Anniversary 2013-2023

Hartford, CT October 2023: Journey Writers, Inc., is happy to announce the publication of their anthology entitled: **Journeys**. it includes original poetry, prose, short stories and more, written by Journey Writers members

**WHO:** Journey Writers, Inc.  
**WHAT:** Publication of Anthology, *Journeys*  
**WHEN:** July 2023  
**WHERE:** journeywriters.org

To make a purchase, please go to our website, [journeywriters.org](http://journeywriters.org), and make your purchase from Book Baby. We are grateful for your support.

Journey Writers, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization that provides a safe, open, and supportive environment for writers to share their work, receive constructive feedback and encouragement and develop their skills.

For more information, please contact Denise Best, Board of Directors, Journey Writers, Inc., 860-983-7116, [dstdbest@gmail.com](mailto:dstdbest@gmail.com)

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## News Briefs: From Jamaica Information Service (JIS File)

# More Than 100,000 Jamaicans To Be Trained In Good Parenting This Year

By Mickella Anderson-Gordon

More than 100,000 persons will be trained in good parenting by the National Parenting Support Commission this academic year.

This is more than twice the number trained last year, according to Minister of Education and Youth, Hon. Fayval Williams.

She was speaking during a post-Cabinet press briefing at Jamaica House, Kingston, Jamaica.

“During the last post-Cabinet press briefing, I informed the nation that during the last school year across the education sector, with the leadership of the Division of School Services and the National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC), we trained over 41,000 parents in good parenting.

For this new school year, the NPSC will lead the training of [more than] 100,000 parents under the Citizens’ Security Program Indicator II,” the Minister said.

Mrs. Williams pointed out that for the 2023/24 academic year, there are great expectations for better working relationships between parents and their children, and they and the youngsters’ schools.

She said the NPSC is collaborating with ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs), and community organizations to achieve this year’s ambitious target, while noting that several strategies have already been laid out and that the work is beginning.

“There are going to be parent mentors, our parent places will be very busy across the island, and we will have roving parent places as well. Our guidance counselors in our schools will continue to be activated to help with the parenting support programs and, of course, the social workers from the NPSC will all be on board,” Mrs. Williams said.

In addition, there will be the continued use of technology to increase and maintain parental involvement, through the Ministry’s ‘Stay Connect’ program.

“Nothing of this magnitude has been tried before. We are committed. We are seeing the impact already from the 41,000 parents who have been trained and we are very excited about this program,” Minister Williams stated.

### Quick Facts

Jamaica is the 3rd largest Island in the Caribbean, home to some of the world’s fastest sprinters ever and it’s own genre of music, reggae, made world famous by the legendary singer Bob Marley.

Parishes : 14  
Capital : Kingston  
Government:

Constitutional Monarchy

### The Jamaican National Motto: Out of Many One People

Jamaica is one of the most diverse and colorful countries in the Caribbean. Our history, our culture and our people have propelled this small island of just 4,244 sq. miles to the international stage.

People: 2,898,677  
Independence: 1962



### Other Useful Information

#### Returning Residents Urged to Utilize Jamaica Business Gateway

Returning residents who are interested in starting a business are being encouraged to utilize recently launched Jamaica Business Gateway for assistance. Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, Senator the Hon. Aubyn Hill, who gave the advice, said the electronic...

#### Coronavirus

Returning Jamaicans, visitors urged to obey COVID-19 protocols  
By Ainsworth Morris

Returning Jamaicans and visitors to the island are being reminded to obey the protocols and rules outlined by the Government of Jamaica to prevent the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Up to Wednesday August 18, 2023, Jamaica had recorded 17 new COVID-19 cases, bringing to 1,146, the total number of confirmed positive cases of the virus to date.

Six of the 17 new cases are imported, arriving from the United States (US) in early July; five are contacts of confirmed cases; and six are under investigation.

Of the 17 newly confirmed cases, 11 are males and six are females, ranging in age from four months to 71 years. They have addresses in St. Thomas (7), St. James (3), St. Catherine (2), Kingston and St. Andrew (1), St. Mary (1), St. Ann (1), St. Elizabeth (1), and Manchester (1).

Under the COVID-19 protocols, all returning residents are required to abide by the 14-day quarantine order where they are only allowed to leave home once per day to carry out basic needs, such as obtaining food or medical supplies.

Persons under this measure must work from home and are not allowed to leave their homes or hotels or to attend funerals, weddings, parties or any gatherings.

The Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) is reporting that several persons have been violating the self-quarantine rules, potentially contributing to the spread of COVID-19 in Jamaica.

Head of the Constabulary Communications Unit (CCU), Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Stephanie Lindsay, told JIS News that often “when we call, some persons did not get the (JamCOVID19) app download on their phones so we can be alerted when they leave their zones”.

Through the app, the police are able to monitor the Ministry of Health and Wellness’ database of persons who are to be in quarantine and track their location in order to ensure that they have not left home without permission from the Ministry.

“We also find that a number of persons are giving false addresses upon arrival, so when they leave their zones or fail to log their

temperatures and the police check the locations, they are not found,” she added.

Persons found to be in breach of the quarantine measures can be fined up to \$1 million or six months’ imprisonment.

Meanwhile, visitors to the island are reminded that upon arrival in Jamaica, all persons will be subject to health screening and risk assessment by the local health authorities.

All tourists will be allowed to go to their hotel under a Stay-in-Resilient Corridor Order from their date of entry to Jamaica. Those tested will have to stay in their rooms until their result is returned.

Visitors must remain within the hotel property in the corridor for the duration of their stay. They are not allowed to leave the hotel and go to another property.

Visitors must report symptoms to the hotel medical station. Persons who are symptomatic or become symptomatic during quarantine will be isolated and tested. Visitors who return a negative result will remain on hotel property.

As it relates to business travelers, those on short-stay are required to remain at their intended address, whether a hotel or private home, and are only allowed to leave to conduct their business meeting(s).

They are required to wear a mask in the public space, comply with the physical distancing rule and are not allowed to meet with persons aged 65 and over, to take public transportation or to attend any meeting, event or gathering of more than 20 persons.

Non-residents visiting Jamaica from the US, Brazil, Dominican Republic, and Mexico, which have all been designated as high-risk locations, are required to obtain a COVID-19 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test prior to arrival.

This applies to all non-residents 12 years and older, including those who are business travelers, entering the island on or after August 20 from the designated locations.

They are required to do the test within 10 days prior to their intended date of travel to Jamaica. All persons applying to enter on visitjamaica.com from the designated high-risk locations are required to upload their COVID-19 PCR test certificate as part of the application process.

This requirement is already in effect for non-residents from Arizona, Florida, New York and Texas in the US.

### PASSPORT: Get The Facts

The Government of Jamaica (GOJ) through the Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency (PICA) introduced Jamaica’s first E-passport. This modern travel document has placed the country’s passport system in line with global standards.

#### What is the E-Passport?

The E-passport is a small booklet, that is embedded with an electronic chip containing biometric data. It can be scanned at any airport that facilitates machine-readable passports. The E-passport facilitates easier processing during travel, provides a more secure form of identification and aids in preventing identity fraud.

#### Who is Eligible?

The E-passport will be issued to all citizens applying for a:

#### New passport

Renewal of a previously issued passport  
Replacement of a current passport

#### How to Apply

Applications may be submitted to PICA through its website or in person at the PICA office and will follow the same procedure as regular passport

applications.

#### Adult applicants must submit:

A Birth Certificate/Adoption Certificate or Jamaican Citizenship Certificate  
Two identical passport-sized photographs, one of which should be certified by the official who authorised the completed application form  
A valid government ID  
The completed application form  
Current passport (for renewals)  
Minors under three years of age do not need to appear in person. Minors over three years old must appear in person at the PICA office, accompanied by a parent or legal guardian who will submit:

#### The minor’s Birth

Certificate/Adoption Certificate or Jamaican Citizenship Certificate  
Two identical passport-sized photographs, one of which should be certified by the official who authorised the completed application form  
The parent or legal guardian’s valid government ID  
The application form completed by the parent or legal guardian  
The minor’s current passport (for renewals)



For additional information, contact:  
Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency (PICA)  
25C Constant Spring Road  
Kingston 10  
Telephone: 876-754-7422  
Website: www.pica.gov.jm  
Email: info@pica.gov.jm  
Facebook: Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency, Jamaica  
Twitter: @PICAJamaica  
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# eBooks: Supporting Education In The Digital Age



The government of Jamaica (GOJ), through the Ministry of Education and Youth (MOEY), is providing electronic versions of printed textbooks that can be retrieved on various digital devices by secondary-level students.

Approximately \$158 million has been spent on eBooks this year for Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) subjects including English Language (grades seven to 11); Integrated Science (grades seven to nine); Principles of Accounts (grades 10-11); and Principles of Business (grades 10-11).

#### Process

The process begins with school administrators identifying students who have or are able to access devices. A list of these pupils is then compiled and sent to the MOEY. The Ministry, based on availability, will then distribute eBooks to selected students.

#### Criteria

To be considered for selection, students must meet the following criteria:  
• Own or have access to a laptop or tablet  
• Have internet access, with school-level access being sufficient for the initial download

• Should not possess hard copies of the book(s)  
**eBook Codes**

To ensure access to these electronic resources, students must redeem the eBook licence within 30 days of receipt, otherwise the licence will be revoked. The Ministry will reassign unredeemed codes to other students.

#### For additional information, contact:

Ministry of Education and Youth  
2-4 National Heroes Circle  
Kingston 4  
Tel: 876-922-1400-9  
Fax: 876-948-9132  
Email: customerservice@moey.gov.j

m  
Website: www.moey.gov.jm  
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