



Jamaica Coalition for Tobacco Control

28 Beechwood Avenue, P.O. Box 338, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 926-4378, 929-3195 • Fax: (876) 754-6441
email: jctc@heartfoundationja.org

NEWS RELEASE

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JCTC SUPPORTS MINISTER OF HEALTH ON HIS PRINCIPLED STANCE

It was announced that a tobacco company will be spending 20-million dollars to support skills training in four St Catherine constituencies. Experience has shown that such actions by tobacco companies are primarily geared towards garnering support of the public at large and to encourage the use of tobacco which on a yearly basis affects to a great extent, the health and lives of Jamaicans.

The Jamaica Coalition for Tobacco Control stands firm with the Minister of Health, Hon. Dr. Fenton Ferguson, for his PRINCIPLED stance in chiding his colleagues who have reportedly accepted corporate donations from the tobacco industry for their constituencies. The deadly effects of tobacco smoking are well documented. Cigarette smoking is addictive and most persons start the habit before they are 18 years old. These facts led to the WHO establishing a public health treaty – the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control – which was ratified by the Jamaican government in 2005. The Minister of Health said that he was speaking as a responsible minister, and that accepting the donation violates an agreement signed with an international body. There is a fundamental and irreconcilable conflict between the tobacco industry's interests and public health policy

Member Organizations:

Association of General Practitioners of Jamaica • Caribbean College of Family Physicians, Jamaica Chapter
Caribbean Public Health Association • Diabetes Association of Jamaica • Jamaica Cancer Society • Nurses Association of Jamaica
The Heart Foundation of Jamaica • The Medical Association of Jamaica

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interests. Given the Government's public declaration to pass comprehensive tobacco control legislation in this parliamentary year, it is disappointing to see that some Members of Parliament continue to disregard the FCTC - in particular Article 5.3 which speaks to countries denormalizing and regulating activities described as "socially responsible" by the tobacco industry. The profits made by the tobacco industry are made the expense of the health of smokers and second hand smokers.

The end does not justify the means and we call on the Prime Minister to address this issue in the interest of the nation.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Knox Hagley".

Knox Hagley, CD, SC (Hon), FRCP, FRCPE, FACP, FACC, FFPH
Chairman

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