

# **Technical Cooperation among Countries Project (TCC) Funded by PAHO/WHO for Belize / Jamaica Exchange Visit**

**Title of Programme: Sharing of Knowledge and Experiences regarding the Health of (and provision of Health Services to) Older Persons between Belize and Jamaica.**

On 8<sup>th</sup> November 2007, 4 visitors arrived from Jamaica to be hosted by the National Council on Ageing. Unfortunately due to flight problems their trip was cut short to 1½ days but nevertheless it was felt that their visit was worthwhile.

The visitors were: Mrs. Beverley Hall-Taylor, Executive Director of the National Council for Senior Citizens, Dr. Yvonne Munroe, from the Ministry of Health, Mr. Raphael Barnett from the National Health Fund and Mrs. Chloe Morris from the Ageing & Wellness Centre at Mona Campus UWI.

During their visit they were introduced to the Ministry of Health and the Health Information System; the Belize Social Security Board and the National Health Insurance Programme; the Pharmacy at Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital and the distribution of medications to Older People and the Mercy Care Centre that provides holistic healthcare to poor older people in the Belize City community.

On December 9<sup>th</sup> 2007, the team from Belize traveled to Jamaica for the reciprocal visit. The team included Ms. Lindy Jeffery, Executive Director for the National Council on Ageing, Mrs. Marva Nicholas, Director for the Mercy Care Centre and Dr. Peter Allen, Director of the Policy Analysis and Planning Unit in the Ministry of Health. The visit lasted 3 days and was packed with meetings and visits of interest designed to raise awareness of the facilities and programmes that enhanced the quality of life of older people in Jamaica which not only included access to essential medication but also social programmes.

The outcome of the TCC exchange visit between Belize and Jamaica was:

- 1: Belize and Jamaica agreed to continue to maintain contact and develop a joint research proposal project through the Ministries of Health that would benefit both countries
- 2: The Mona Ageing & Wellness Centre wishes to reproduce some of the healthy ageing information from the National Council on Ageing for use at the UWI.
- 3: The sharing of information was most valuable. Belize introduced Jamaica to the Health Information System and Jamaica explained the workings of the National Health Fund, along with the JADEP, PATH, NI Gold and Coral Leaf programmes that provided free medication for older people
- 4: Jamaica provided Belize with the opportunity to visit projects that focused on intergenerational activities and the benefits of including older people as teachers of the youth.
- 5: The Mercy Care Centre was a model for Jamaica as an NGO providing holistic care to older persons by concentrating on the health, nutritional, spiritual and social needs of older persons.