

Health warning

DOCTOR WANTS GIRLS VACCINATED AGAINST HPV

Parents are being encouraged to allow their daughters to be vaccinated against the Human Papillomavirus (HPV), one of the most common sexually transmitted diseases.

Some parents were reluctant to give their approval when the Ministry of Health began a vaccination drive for first-form girls in public and private secondary schools, two years ago.

Medical officials say HPV can be spread even when an infected person shows no signs or symptoms.

Speaking at the launch of the 2015 **Globeathon** walk and run to end women's cancers this morning, Gynaecologist Dr Vikash Chatrani said the vaccination has been clinically tested and proven safe.

"HPV has been shown to be responsible for over 99 per cent of cervical cancer cases. So you may hear a lot of things out there, but this is essentially a cancer vaccine . . . We are giving young girls because we give vaccine to people before they become infected."

"It is not common for young girls to have gynaecological cancers, but I didn't want you to believe that it is only the advanced age women above 60 and above 70. We have had 15-year-olds, numerous 30 something year-olds, 50-year-olds . . .," he added.

Meanwhile, he stressed that while breast cancer remained the number one cause of death among Caribbean women, the mortality rates for cancers of the reproductive system were higher.

"More women are dying because of below the belt women's cancer. And that mortality is in excess of 50 per cent for cervical, in excess of 60 per cent for ovarian, and just when you add them up together, it's more than breast

cancer.

"We need this to stop. We need more effort to be focused below the belt," Dr Chatrani said.

He also noted that while a pap smear was important in detecting cervical cancer, there are four others that escape detection from this test.

"You still have . . . vulva cancer, vaginal cancer, uterine cancer and ovarian cancer."

"So a woman tends to believe that once they have had their pap smear all is well if that is normal. But there are still other cancers you have to look out for. Pay attention to your body. If there is something that has changed and persisted for more than two weeks, there is something that is going on, so visit your doctor," Dr Chatrani insisted.

He encouraged the public to support this

year's awareness campaign, which will be held on September 13.

Dr Chatrani said last year's event raised over \$60,000 and funds raised from this year's **Globeathon** will go towards improving women's cancer services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, through the purchase of modernized equipment, as well as delivering treatment to patients.

Globeathon is being sponsored by Sagicor Life Inc, and vice president of Group Insurance Patricia Brathwaite-Marshall said the company would continue to support such community initiatives.

"We believe positive change and development can be achieved through support of initiatives in the areas of health, education, sport and youth-four important threads of our social fabric," she said. (AH)



Dr Vikash Chatrani



Globeathon team captain Dr Vikash Chatrani (left) showing the features of the official Globeathon shirt to supporter of the event, entertainer Mikey Mercer (second at left), while President of the Barbados Cancer Society, Dr Dorothy Cooke-Johnson (centre), Assistant Vice President Marketing Sagicor General Roger Spenser (right) and Vice president of Group Insurance, Sagicor Life Inc, Patricia Brathwaite-Marshall look on.

Colin Jordan back on track

Tourism consultant and Barbados Labour Party (BLP) candidate for St Peter Colin Jordan today demonstrated that he was fully recovered and rearing to go following his recent illness, firing some sharp jabs at the Freundel Stuart administration.

Jordan underwent a medical procedure at the Sparman Clinic in early June after he fell ill.

However, after he and fellow BLP candidate Edmund Hinkson took 40 children from Roland Edwards and St Albans Primary on a tour of Carlisle Laboratories in Warrens, St Michael this morning, he told the media that all was well again.

"Everything is still on track. I've recovered and I'm active," the hotel executive said.

Sounding like a candidate on a mission, Jordan contended, "our society is in such bad shape at this point that only if you are dead you should not be involved. Everybody who is breathing, even if you have to do it from your hospital bed, should be involved."

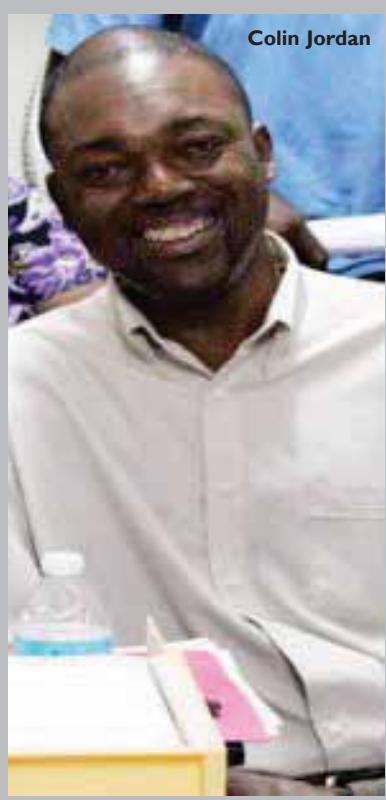
"I have a passport that says Barbados. I don't have a green card. This is where I live, this is where my children live, this is where my wife lives, this is where my mother lives,

this is where my relatives and friends live, and I am duty bound to do whatever I can to make sure that improvements come to society," Jordan insisted.

He also wasted little time criticizing the Stuart Government, stating that there was a "lack of hope" among Barbadians, which has contributed to the upsurge in crime.

"Criminality in a lot of cases is a reflection of hope being sucked out of the community. When there is no hope then people find themselves in a situation where they don't care, because they figure society has given up on them and they don't see any hope and they don't see an out," he suggested.

"We have to provide hope. Those of us who lead at all levels need to provide hope. In the schools, in the churches, and at the political level it is even more important . . . [and with] the current Government . . . we don't feel there is that hope. Every society, every economy, every community goes through challenges, but what is necessary in challenging times is maintaining hope, and I would like to see Government provide that hope," Jordan said. (RB)



Colin Jordan



David Bellamy