

Health

# New gyno unit opens

**WOMEN NOW HAVE a unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) specially designated to the treatment and diagnosis of gynaecological cancers.**

The Gynaecological Cancer and Diagnostic Unit was opened yesterday and its benefits proclaimed by president of the Barbados Cancer Society (BCS), Dr Dorothy Cooke-Johnson.

She said she was pleased that the centre was dedicated solely for the purpose of women's gynaecological cancers, which have not been addressed as vocally as they should. She said 50 women died from breast cancer annually,

while 100 men die from prostate cancer.

"Women's gynae cancer has not hit the headlines as prostate and breast cancer has .... Cervix cancer, at 18 deaths annually, has not seemed so much of an enemy.

"Adding totals of the incidence and mortality from cancer of the vagina, vulva, ovary, uterus and cervix shoots the numbers of gynae cancers right up into prominence and demands equal attention as breast and prostate cancers. It is now seen as essential to champion this cause," Cooke-Johnson said.

The newly opened

unit was completed with funds raised from the local arm of Globeathon, a worldwide action of awareness and fund-raising for women's cancer.

**Raised \$82 000**

The Globeathon walks of 2013 and 2014 raised enough to contribute \$82 000 to the transformation of the old colposcopy unit at the QEH to the new unit.

Funds from this year's walk will be dedicated to the purchase of equipment for the centre.

Minister of Health John Boyce said the ministry was working on a national cancer

action plan to assess the root causes and solution for common preventable cancers.

Boyce, who said that gynaecological cancers, familiarly known as below the belt cancers, were the leading cause of cancer in women and were responsible for on average 20 yearly deaths over the last five years.

"Only through a comprehensive national cancer screening and prevention programme

will we be able to achieve much lower rates and to this end the Ministry of Health is working on a national cancer action plan to address the root causes and solutions for common preventable cancers," Boyce said.

He added that the ministry also introduced the human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine to be given to the pre-teen and teen girls to prevent cervical cancer.

He added that at the

beginning of the September 2015 school term the vaccine was extended to teenaged boys.

"I am happy to report that the uptake is showing increasingly good results," Boyce said.

Dr Vikash Chatrani, a board member and clinical director of the BCS, and consultant in obstetrics and gynaecology at the QEH, spearheaded the effort with the unit. (LK)



PRESIDENT OF THE Barbados Cancer Society (BCS), Dr Dorothy Cooke-Johnson, looking at a piece of equipment while Dr Vikash Chatrani, who spearheaded the effort with the unit, senior consultant Dr Wayne Welch and Minister of Health John Boyce (left), look on. (Picture by Xtra Vision Photography)

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