

One Health: The Role of Professions Allied to Medicine

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Approximately 75% of recently emerging infectious diseases of human concern is of animal origin. Within the last decade, the world has been confronted with several of these health problems not only in terms of magnitude but of frequency. The Caribbean and specifically Jamaica has faced some of these health challenges evidenced by the entry of Chikungunya and Zika virus. Endemic dengue fever remains a concern as well as other health issues such as H1N1. Apparent recognition from these occurrences is that an isolated approach cannot be employed. The solution calls for partnership on a deeper level.

“One Health” has answered that call. One Health refers to the application of a collaborative approach in combating health problems at the human, animal and environment interface. It embraces an appreciation that no one group or entity can resolve the preponderance of health issues which include but is not limited to climate change, emerging and re-emerging diseases, food safety and food security, water safety and management. In light of the statistics, “One Health” demands a deliberate cooperative effort from the Ministries with responsibility for health, agriculture and the environment and has sparked a shift globally towards this model. All groups within the health sector including Medical Practitioners, Nurses and importantly, the Professions Allied to Medicine have a specific role to play in achieving this objective.

The Professions Allied to Medicine include a diverse group of health professionals who through preventative actions facilitate and contribute to the holistic care of all. The group include Medical Laboratory Technologists, Nutritionists, Dieticians, Public Health Inspectors and others, some of whom carry out their functions at the community level and are exposed daily to issues that require One Health interventions. Many health and health-related crises can be averted if dealt with at this level. Therefore, this professional group is at significant points on the continuum of health care delivery to demonstrate the One Health approach.



Going forward, the Professions Allied to Medicine have some important mandates such as providing essential baseline data for targeted health problems, facilitating early laboratory detection of culpable organisms and initiating strategies for intervention through internal and

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external partnerships, fulfilling the One Health mission which necessitates purposeful collaboration, as well as contributing to Vision 2030 Jamaica and the United Nations 2030 agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

References:

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