

7,376 Calls Handled by UWI COVID-19 Call Centre

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Kingston, Jamaica, May 27, 2020 -- The Ministry of Health and Wellness is reporting that the coronavirus (COVID-19) call centre at the University of the West Indies (UWI) handled a total of 7,376 calls during its first month of operations from April 6 to May 6.

Of the total calls, 91 per cent were outbound.

Referrals from parish health departments for follow-ups accounted for 2,165 or 29 per cent; 2,036 or 27 per cent were persons with exposure to the virus but had no symptoms; 1,773 or 24 per cent were persons with no exposure and no symptoms; and 406 or 5.5 per cent were persons with no exposure and mild symptoms.

A total of 1,503 quarantine requests were processed. The call centre also handled 197 matters that had been referred to the ministry by physicians.

There were 81 calls from persons with exposure to the virus and displaying mild symptoms, and 35 from persons with exposure and having moderate to severe symptoms.

The majority of calls were related to the South East Regional Health Authority with 1,263, followed by the Western Regional Health Authority at 538, North East Regional Health Authority with 412, and Southern Regional Health Authority with 319.

Director of Policy Analysis and Research in the Office of the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry, Rowena Palmer, said that the operations have been going well and lauded the partnership with UWI as being very helpful in attending to the concerns of members of the public.

"Approximately 80 medical student volunteers have been engaged... to execute daily tasks in the call centre," she noted.

"These include returning calls to members of the public who have been referred to the ministry by the contracted call centre, Itel business process outsourcing; processing of quarantine letters that have been requested for employment purposes; and logging of all calls using a standard referral form developed by the ministry," she said further.

The call centre at UWI was set up to support the work of the ministry in dealing with COVID-19.

It operates from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm daily under a three-shift arrangement, with four hours each shift.

There are currently four volunteer clinicians supporting the activities at the centre.

Some of the matters dealt with include the controlled re-entry programme, testing protocol and test sites, mental health calls from persons with depression, and COVID-19 positive patients concerned about discrimination.

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