

Mass Media Anti-Obesity Campaign To Warn Jamaicans About The Harms Of Sugary Drinks

(November 17th, 2017, Kingston, Jamaica and New York, USA) Vital Strategies congratulates the Government of Jamaica's Ministry of Health (MOH) and The Heart Foundation of Jamaica (HFJ) on the launch of a new anti-obesity campaign, "Are you drinking yourself sick?" The campaign aims to warn the public about the amount of sugar present in sugary drinks like soda and fruit juices, and the health harms associated with consuming them. Vital Strategies provided technical assistance for the campaign, which was launched today in Kingston by Jamaica's Minister of Health, Dr. Christopher Tufton, and Deborah Chen, Executive Director of the Heart Foundation of Jamaica.

"Jamaica's people and economy are being harmed by an epidemic of obesity fueled by the consumption of unhealthy foods – including sugary drinks," said Sandra Mullin, Vital Strategies' Senior Vice President, Policy, Advocacy, Communication. "Strong policies and media campaigns can influence people to reduce their consumption of sugary drinks and excess sugar, helping to prevent obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and even some cancers. We commend the Ministry of Health and the Heart Foundation of Jamaica for running this campaign and are proud to support their work towards creating a healthier Jamaica."

"To say we are pleased to be launching this campaign in Jamaica is indeed an understatement as our vision at the Heart Foundation of Jamaica (HFJ) is to help Jamaicans to have a longer and better quality of life. One way that we can live a healthier lifestyle is by reducing the amount of sugar we consume," said Deborah Chen, Executive Director, Heart Foundation of Jamaica, at today's launch event.

The "Are you drinking yourself sick?" campaign is centered on a 30-second Public Service Announcement (PSA) which will run for one month from today on national TV channels, in cinemas, and on radio stations. In addition, campaign ads will run in print newspapers, on digital media, and on outdoor media including billboards and bus-wraps. On social media, people will be encouraged to follow @heartfoundationja, @themohgovjm and @jamaica_move to learn more about how they can reduce added sugar in their diets. They will also be encouraged to share information to support the campaign via social media using the hashtags #AreYouDrinkingYourselfSick and #LessSugarMoreLife.

The PSA shows the journey of a busy working mother, Rosie, as she consumes sugary drinks through the course of her day. Like 63 percent of adult women in Jamaica, Rosie is overweight. After drinking a fruit-flavored drink at breakfast, an energy drink on the way to work, a flavored water with lunch and two sodas at dinner time, she has consumed 50 teaspoons of extra sugar across the day – four times the daily limit recommended by World Health Organization. A voiceover explains that this added sugar increases her risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes and can lead to heart disease and some cancers. At the end of the PSA, Rosie is very ill, in hospital, with her family by her side. It ends with a call to action, urging Jamaicans to reduce their consumption of sugary drinks.

According to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), 78 percent of all deaths in Jamaica are caused by NCDs. Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of adult women in Jamaica are overweight or obese, as are nearly a third (31 percent) of girls. Across the whole population, more than a third (37 percent) of adults are overweight or obese, as are 13.4 percent of children. Jamaica's economy is projected to lose over 77.1 billion Jamaican dollars over the next 15 years (2017 – 2032) in terms of direct (treatment costs) and indirect costs (lost productivity) due to cardiovascular disease (CVD) and diabetes complications alone.

Vital Strategies provides technical assistance to cities and countries around the world to change public attitudes and behaviors and build support for obesity prevention policies. To date, Vital Strategies has supported obesity prevention efforts in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and South Africa, as well as Jamaica. Vital Strategies' team of global experts in strategic communication, policy advocacy, and research and evaluation supports local partners advocating for policy change, building local capacity, optimizing effectiveness and growing the evidence base for obesity prevention initiatives. Strategic mass media campaigns implemented to date have been designed to warn consumers about the health harms of sugary drinks and junk foods among children and adults and to build support for taxes on sugary beverages, bans on junk food marketing that targets children, and clear nutritional labelling.

About Vital Strategies

Vital Strategies is a global health organization that believes every person should be protected by a strong public health system. Our team combines evidence-based strategies with innovation to help develop and implement sound public health policies, manage programs efficiently, strengthen data systems, conduct research and design strategic communication campaigns for policy and behavior change. To find out more, please visit www.vitalstrategies.org or [Twitter@VitalStrat](https://twitter.com/VitalStrat).

For further information or to arrange an interview with a Vital Strategies public health expert, please contact [**press@vitalstrategies.org**](mailto:press@vitalstrategies.org).

About The Heart Foundation of Jamaica

The Heart Foundation of Jamaica (HFJ) was formed, as a non-governmental, non-profit organization (NGO), in 1971. The Foundation is a member of the InterAmerican Heart Foundation, the Framework Convention Alliance, the Healthy Caribbean Coalition and the World Heart Federation and is involved in prevention programmes for cardiovascular disease.

Source : <https://www.vitalstrategies.org/press/mass-media-anti-obesity-campaign-warn-jamaicans-harms-sugary-drinks/>

Sweet drinks for the day equal more than **50** teaspoons of sugar

ARE YOU DRINKING YOURSELF SICK?

DRINK WATER INSTEAD!

Ministry of Health
JAMAICA MOVES

Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-WNCdIIWNY>