

**Safer Sex Week 2021**  
**February 7-14, 2021**

The Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW), through the HIV/STI/TB (HST) Unit, collaborated with the Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) and the National Family Planning Board (NFPB) in executing Safer Sex Week 2021, under the theme: **“Safe Sex is Greater Sex”**. Activities for this period were led by the Safer Sex Committee, comprising of members from the following locations:

- Treatment Care and Support Component, HST Unit MOHW
- Strategic Information Component, HST Unit MOHW
- Adolescent Component, HST Unit, MOHW
- Public Relations, MOHW
- Regional BCC Coordinator NERHA
- NFPB Representative
- Ashe Jamaica Representative

Meetings were held monthly starting from July 2020. However, the frequency of committee meetings increased in December 2020 to weekly meetings, as time drew closer to Safe Sex Week observed from February 7-14, 2021.

**Adolescent Activity-February 10, 2021**

The first Safer Sex Week activity was conducted on February 10th at the Teen Hub with adolescents as the target population, under the theme **“Talk Di Tings Dem”**. Young Social Media Influencers were engaged for wrap sessions which involved adolescents island wide who connected via the Teen Hub Instagram page. Influencers also shared the content on their pages enabling a consistent one (1) million viewers. The live stream was promoted a week in advance and was streamed from the MOHW Multipurpose room, to facilitate adequate COVID-19 protocols. The issues discussed were multiple sex partners, condom and lubricant use, consistent HIV testing and condom application demonstrations were done.

See picture and poster related to the event below:





### **Community Based Activities- February 12, 2021**

Based on the reports of sexually transmitted infection (STI) cases submitted in Contact Investigator reports, an assessment was done by the Safer Sex Committee of several communities across Jamaica. From these, three communities were selected for intervention during the Safer Sex Week 2021 after noted increases in the reports of STI cases. These communities were:

- Havannah Heights, Clarendon from Southern Regional Health Authority
- Down's District, Manchester from Southern Regional Health Authority
- Catherine Hall, St. James from Western Regional Health Authority

### **Town Criers**

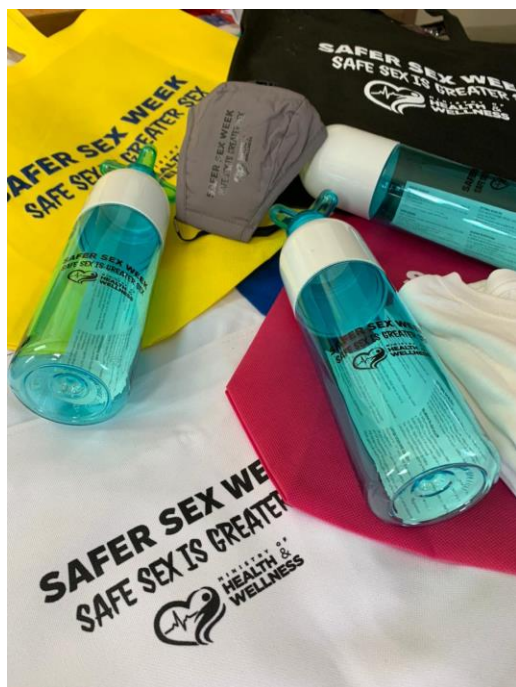
The activities within the communities took place on February 12, 2021. In the weeks leading up to that date, town criers were played advertising the upcoming event. These town criers included a jingle on safe sex, commissioned by the MOHW, which included the following tips:

- Condom usage
- Getting tested
- Knowing your status
- Having one partner
- Talking to your partner about Sex and STIs
- Avoiding drugs and alcohol
- Checking your body

### Novelty Items

Additionally, booths were set up across the different RHA sites. There were giveaways of condoms, lubricants, bags, safe sex pamphlets, MOHW branded water bottles, cloth masks and hand sanitizers. HIV testing and counselling was done on spot (data being collated), with condom demonstrations and safe sex talks. Approximately 500 individuals were reached at each RHA activity.

See below items which were distributed at all events:



### Persons Reached

From the intervention, the following details the numbers of persons reached and tested within each region:

Categories	WRHA	SRHA	Total
Total Reached	153	866	1,019
Total Tested	103	638	741
MSMs unearthed	4	42	46
FSWs	4	22	26
General Population Male	42	216	258
General Population Female	53	358	411
# Testing HIV Positive	0	5	5
# Testing Syphilis Reactive	0	8	8

## Print Media Engagement-February 12 & 14, 2021

Finally, the MOHW placed two full page newspaper spreads. One was placed in the Star on February 12, 2021 and the other in the Gleaner on February 14, 2021. The messages again focussed on spreading the word on the importance of safe sex emphasised by the above theme.

See image placed in the newspaper:



## The following is a SWOT analysis assessment of the overall Safer Sex Week Activities:

### *Strengths:*

Virtual activities afforded the ability to have increased participation from a wide cross section of individuals, demonstrated by the numbers reached in the Teen Hub activity. Additionally, a partnership with the RHAs gave the opportunity for the MOHW to reach multiple 'high risk' communities in need of interventions.

### *Weaknesses:*

There was some difficulty in the promotion of activities and the contacting of influencers. This again could be contributed to COVID-19 and the disruption in normal work hours of business places and persons. This led to some activities being promoted only a week before the event took place. However, there was still sufficient turn out to create an impact and conduct prevention activities.



Connectivity issues in the multi-purpose conference affected persons logging on to the MOHW live stream. Instead, some persons logged on to the live stream of the influencers, however some participants may have been lost.

***Opportunities:***

LIVE sessions create the ability to have content recorded that may be streamed multiple times over multiple online platforms. This creates the opportunity to reach many more persons than those reached on the initial streaming

***Threats:***

COVID-19 has limited the ability to have widespread in person sessions which have traditionally been used for STI Prevention activities. These sessions though conducted, had some restrictions to ensure the safety of all individuals who participated. In addition, there were challenges with connectivity for LIVE sessions that impacted in quality and output. This was mitigated by the provision of external internet from the videographers.

**The Way Forward**

The HST Unit intends to capitalize on the use of social media and online platforms to distribute the content created during the Safer Sex Week. COVID-19 has brought challenges, but it has also exposed the ability to virtually reach wide cross sections of our population with factual, user friendly content on safe sexual practices.

The momentum of Safer Sex Week will be taken as we move into STI Awareness Month April 2021, continuing with the theme, **“Safe Sex is Greater Sex”**.