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For Immediate Release

American Paediatrician, Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, Exposes Relationship Between Childhood Trauma and Adult Illnesses

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Child care professionals are being urged to take a collaborative approach in treating children exposed to trauma instead of the segmented methods being employed.

Speaking at the Courtleigh Hotel and Suites on Monday, American paediatrician Dr. Nadine Burke Harris encouraged teachers, doctors, counsellors, social workers and parents to work together to effect holistic treatment of children exposed to adverse experiences. She also advocated preventative measures like screening, and taking a two-generation approach to treatment, which includes giving support not only to the child, but also the caregiver.

In a presentation addressing various child care and development stakeholders, Dr. Burke Harris said her goal for being in Jamaica was to share her experiences and learn from the experiences of Jamaican child care professionals. Currently on a three-day visit to the island organised by the Child Development Agency (CDA) in collaboration with the Embassy of the United States of America, Dr. Burke Harris is expected to meet with various professionals and associations during a series of events. Themed: 'Know your ACEs: Uncovering the link between Adverse Child Experiences and Illnesses in Adulthood' Dr. Burke Harris will open dialogue and the nexus between (ACEs) and illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes and lung cancer in adulthood.

At the breakfast session - 'ACEs Over Breakfast,' Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, Dr. Maurice Smith announced his Ministry's support to the venture being undertaken by the CDA to educate Jamaican health groups and child care professionals about the effects of ACEs.

He also mentioned that, “a focus on ACEs is commendable because healthy children grow up to be healthy and productive citizens.” Ministry of Health representative, Judith Leiba reiterated this by also lending support to the CDA on behalf of her Ministry.

This session was later followed by a media briefing, meeting with CDA's Clinical Psychologists, and a working session which comprised of a host of doctors, educators, social workers, child advocates and local policy makers. On Tuesday, Dr. Burke Harris was the guest speaker at a panel discussion at the Northern Caribbean University before touring the St. John Bosco Boys' Home.

Dr. Burke Harris' visit continues today with a public lecture at the University of the West Indies, Mona.

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