

12 NORTH COAST TIMES
APRIL 22 – 28, 2004

Record number of women go for Pap Smear at FAMPLAN

FAMPLAN Jamaica has been making headway over the years in providing health care and health care facilities in the community. The Beth Jacobs Clinic is a most vital component of the whole health offering of FAMPLAN which up to years ago was known as the Jamaica Family Planning Association. There are, of course, other offerings such as the Parent Education Program (PEP), the Youth Advocacy Movement (YAM), and The Men against Gender Based Violence is the vital component. This is the second part of a feature started last week (Vol. 9#14) in the Times.

The Beth Jacobs Clinic (FAMPLAN) has many services being offered to the public, with the Pap Smear Project being its latest development. This was developed to specifically raise the awareness of the importance of doing the Pap Smear.

March was Pap Smear awareness month which saw a record number of women doing the Pap Smear at the clinic, St Ann's Bay. This was due to the massive reduction in cost of the procedure. Statistics show this increase. In January, at the original cost, the clinic saw 98 women. In February, also at the original cost, 138 women used the service. Women have the opportunity to have Pap Smear examinations which are done at the clinic every day. However, with the cost

reduction in March, 348 women participated in Pap Smear Awareness Month. The reduction in the cost of doing the Pap smear was to encourage more women to come forward.

The Pap Smear

The Pap Smear has been around for 50 years and it is a simple test which shows changes in the cervix (part of the womb) that may lead to cancer or any other Sexually Transmitted Infection. The Pap Smear can detect abnormal cells even before they become cancerous. You should have this test done once every year and it should not be done when you are menstruating. Any female who is sexually active now or has had sex should do a pap smear, no matter how young or old she is. Women who are 18 years and older who have never had sex should seek their doctor's advice on whether they should get a Pap Smear done. A Pap Smear is simple, quick, and painless.

Other services include counseling, contraceptives, male and female sterilizations, pregnancy tests, blood sugar tests, prostate checks, among other things.

FAMPLAN has its Head Office at 14 King Street in St. Ann's Bay and also the Lenworth Jacobs Clinic at 65 East Street in Kingston. To get more information, you can e-mail them at: famplan@angel.com. You can also call their toll-free advice line at 1-888-991-9473.

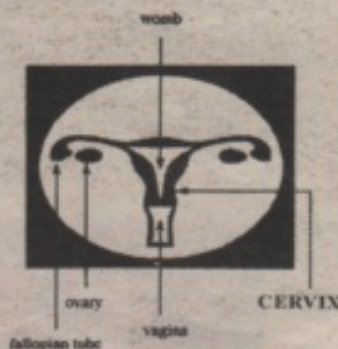


Diagram of female reproductive system. A Pap Smear can tell if a woman has a cancer growing on her cervix.