

Youth Advocates lauds Government referral system to point students to condom, Pill dispensers

May 9, 2009

The Jamaica Youth Advocacy Network (JYAN) commends the Ministry of Education for its initiative to provide a framework for a referral mechanism that will point students to 'child-friendly health services' where they can access contraceptives.

This is a positive step towards ensuring that our students, sexually active or not, can access the services that will help them prevent unplanned pregnancies and avert the risk of contracting STIs including HIV and AIDS. The referral system is a positive approach to providing a space for students to make informed decisions about their sexuality and sexual health.

The Ministry's move is an important developmental step that requires a partnership between youth, parents, school administrators and teachers, health professionals and other service providers for us to ensure quality of life and productivity among young people so they can contribute to national development.

The JYAN encourages the National Parent-Teachers Association (NPTA) to join the Ministry of Education, NGOs and civil society as we continue to advance programmes and interventions to increase young people's knowledge of sex and related issues and foster an enabling environment for them to adopt positive behaviours.

We applaud this initiative and encourage the government and all stakeholders to pursue other key complementary strategies to expand access even further, such as through campus-based SRH services at colleges and universities.