



COURT
ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION

THE COURT NEWSLETTER

Also In This Issue:

- Parish Courts on Track to Being Backlog Free
- Justice McDonald-Bishop to Act as President
- Photo Highlights: Swearing-in Ceremony
- Chief Justice Calls for Abolition of Jury Trials
- CAD Ramps up Public Education Programme
- Building a Culture of Service at the CAD
- Careers in our Courts: Social Worker
- Dwimar Pinnock Dominates Sagjor's Team Bubble Run

JCMS BEING IMPLEMENTED IN MORE COURTS

The Judicial Case Management System (JCMS), which is highly touted as a game changer for digitizing some judicial processes, is being introduced in more courts this year.

The JCMS is a web-based system integrating all courts on a single platform and is designed to facilitate jury selection management, caseflow management and scheduling and transcript production.

Effective April 2022, Chief Justice Bryan Sykes said the web-based system will be rolled out in Trelawny, Portland, St. Thomas, Westmoreland and Manchester Parish Courts. It will also be implemented in the Clarendon Family Court.

The JCMS will help to enhance operational efficiency. He added that the web-based system is a



Clarendon Family Court in Chapleton is one of several courts that will be operating on the new Judicial Case Management System (JCMS) in the 2022/23 financial year.

“very significant development in the life of our Judiciary.”

“We will get to the point where we will have electronic filing; and where we are heading with that, ultimately, is to have electronic transfer of files between courts, so that we reduce reliance on paper. We are heading in the right direction and this should bring about significant efficiency,” Chief Justice Sykes said.

It is the hope of the Judiciary to have the JCMS fully implemented in all courts by the end of the year.

Several courts and divisions are already operating on the system. These are the Court of Appeal; the Criminal Registry, Revenue and Gun Courts; the St. James, Hanover, Westmoreland, and Trelawny Family Courts; and the St. Elizabeth and St. Mary Parish Courts.

The Chief Justice was speaking at the opening of the Hilary Term of the Home Circuit Court held in Kingston on January 7, 2022.

PARISH COURTS ON TRACK TO BEING BACKLOG FREE

The Parish Courts remain on track to clear the backlog of cases by 2025 as outlined in the Judiciary's strategic plan. Data from 2021 show that in the Criminal and Civil Divisions of the Parish Courts, ninety per cent (90%) of matters were being disposed of in less than two years.

Speaking at a Swearing-in Ceremony for Judges at King's House in St. Andrew on January 06, 2022, Chief Justice Bryan Sykes said 2021 was a challenging year due to Covid-19. Nevertheless, the court system remains resilient and continues to dispose of cases in record numbers.

"In the Parish Courts they have recovered magnificently. As far as the criminal cases are concerned, we are now at the point where 94 per cent of those cases are disposed of in under 24 months. If that continues, the Parish Courts on the criminal side are on course to becoming backlog free within the six-year target that was set," he explained.

Chief Justice Sykes continued: "The same thing can be said too on the civil side of the Parish Courts where 90 per cent of cases there have been disposed of within less than two years. If that trend continues, the Parish Courts on the civil side will be backlog free in the six-year period that we have set, or less."

Family Courts

Meanwhile, the specialised Family Courts are achieving over 90 per cent disposal rate of cases. "We are now beginning to get reliable data from there [Family Courts]. What is now known is that 91 per cent of the cases there, are now disposed of in under 24 months. In essence, what we are saying then, is that the performance of the Parish Courts is such that we will be backlog free assuming that the trend continues for six years or less and so that will become a historic day in the life of our country."



Governor General His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen (centre), Chief Justice the Honourable Mr Justice Bryan Sykes (left) and President of the Court of Appeal the Honourable Mr Justice Patrick Brooks (right) flanked by newly appointed judges following a Swearing-in Ceremony at King's House in St. Andrew on Thursday, January 6, 2022.

JUSTICE MARVA MCDONALD BISHOP TO ACT AS PRESIDENT OF THE COURT OF APPEAL

Justice Marva McDonald-Bishop has been sworn in to act as President of the Court of Appeal by Governor General Sir Patrick Allen for the Hilary Term, while Justice Patrick Brooks is on vacation.

Addressing the audience at the Swearing-in Ceremony at King's House in St. Andrew on January 6, 2022, Justice McDonald-Bishop gave an emotional acceptance speech and reminisced on kind words she received from her mentors that propelled her to the heights of her judicial career.

She told the gathering that Justice Boyd Carey had written a note to her earlier in her career stating: "The law is for serious people...but you have the necessary qualities. A desire for excellence, a talent for hard work, an enquiring mind and stamina. All these characteristics you have in large quantities."

"Justice Boyd Carey and [former] Deputy Director Bryan Sykes knew then that they gave those words to me at a time when despite what might have seemed like commendable achievements on my part, I still suffered self-doubt, low self-esteem as a young girl from deep rural Bamboo Walk, Retreat, St Mary," Justice McDonald Bishop said.

Justice McDonald continued: "Little did they know that what might have been received as simple words of commendation would have a lasting impact on my professional life. It is against that background that I stand here this morning almost teary-eyed and with a bag of mixed emotions to accept the appointment to act as President of the Court of Appeal of Jamaica. I am overwhelmed by the decision of those who considered it fitting to take a chance on me."

Mental Health

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic was not lost on Justice McDonald-Bishop, she noted that judges have been under tremendous mental strain due to the crisis. Consequently, Justice McDonald-Bishop plans to pay special attention to the mental health needs of staff during her stint as acting president. She explained that the well-being of judges is closely linked to access to justice and especially urgent considering the effects of the pandemic.



The Honourable Justice Marva McDonald Bishop receiving her Instrument of Appointment from Governor General, His Excellency, the Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen during the swearing-in of judges at King's House in St. Andrew on Thursday, January 6, 2022.

JUSTICE MARVA MCDONALD BISHOP TO ACT AS PRESIDENT OF THE COURT OF APPEAL

"It is my fervent hope that we'll be able to identify a secure and convenient space on the court building that we can retrofit to create an oasis in the judicial desert. This is intended to be a space to which judges and their staff can retreat to and attend to the needs of their minds, bodies, and souls, so that we can better serve the public that depends on us to be fit, healthy and above all, safe," she announced.

The Honourable Mrs Justice Georgiana Fraser and the Honourable Mr Justice Kissock Laing were also sworn in to act as Judges of the Court of Appeal. Also taking the oath of office as Acting Puisne Judges were Tania Mott Tulloch-Reid and Sandria Wong-Small.



Governor-General His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen (right) pictured in conversation with the Hon. Mrs. Justice Marva McDonald-Bishop (left) who was sworn in to act as President of the Court of Appeal and Chief Justice Bryan Sykes. The occasion was the swearing-in ceremony of five members of the judiciary held on Thursday, January 06, 2022 at King's House in St. Andrew.

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS - SWEARING-IN CEREMONY



Governor-General, His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen (right) presents the instrument of appointment to the Hon. Mr. Justice Kissock Laing after he was sworn in to act as Judge of the Court of Appeal for the period January 10 to April 8.



Governor-General, His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen (right) presents the instrument of appointment to Master Tania Mott Tulloch-Reid after she was sworn in to act as Pusine Judge on January 06, 2022.



The Honourable Mrs. Georgiana Fraser receiving her Instrument of Appointment from His Excellency Sir Patrick Allen at a Swearing-in Ceremony held at King's House in St. Andrew on Thursday, January 06, 2022.



Her Honour Mrs. Sandria Wong-Small takes the Oath of Office virtually to act as Puisne Judge at a ceremony held at King's House in St. Andrew on Thursday, January 06, 2022.

CAD RAMPS UP PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME



Members of staff from Court Administration Division and Hanover Parish Court at the SDC's Community Market and Business Fair at Lord's Playfield in Lucea, Hanover on Friday, January 28, 2022.

The Court Administration Division (CAD) and the Hanover Parish Court participated in the Social Development Corporation's (SDC) Community Market and Business Fair held at Lord's Playfield in Lucea, Hanover on January 28, 2022.

Senior Public Relations Officer at the CAD Mr. Shannick Dawkins said this forms part of the Judiciary's mandate to sensitise the public about the services offered by the court to increase access to justice. Mr. Dawkins explained that the COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging for the Judiciary's face-to-face public education programmes. Nonetheless, he said the Judiciary continues to seek out opportunities to educate the public.

"The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has no doubt exacerbated some issues that Jamaicans are confronted with and this is why we find it necessary to continue our public education machinery so they can be aware of the services offered by the courts. For example, the Jamaica Constabulary Force reported an increase in incidents of domestic violence. We want victims of domestic violence to know that the court can help in that regard. Consequently, these victims can go to the court and take out a protection order against their abusers," Mr. Dawkins said.

He added that the initiative is also an opportunity for the Judiciary to engage members of the public to improve

CAD RAMPS UP PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME

customer satisfaction.

“The conversations we have with customers sometimes determine the content for the production of public education material or form the basis for campaigns in the media to ensure that the information they are seeking is readily available,” Mr. Dawkins explained.

Mrs Icema Brown-Sanderson, who was selling her crochet accessories at the event, said “I had some questions about probate and they were answered. The answers were to the point and easy to understand.”

Racquel Bucknor, a resident of Johnson Town in Hanover, was grateful to the CAD and the Hanover Parish Court for participating at the SDC’s Community Market and Business Fair.

“It’s a good thing because many people are not aware of the services provided by the courts. Also, it’s a genius idea to come to the market to give people much-needed information while they are shopping or selling,” Ms Bucknor added.

This is the fourth Community Market and Business Fair that the CAD and the courts have participated in for the 2021-2022 financial year.



BUILDING COMMUNITIES... BUILDING JAMAICA

Senior Public Relations Officer at the Court Administration Division Mr Shannick Dawkins talking with small business operators at the SDC’s Community Market and Business Fair at Lord’s Playfield in Hanover on Friday, January 28, 2022.

BUILDING A CULTURE OF SERVICE AT CAD



File Photo:

Mrs Kadiesh Fletcher
Director - Client Services, Communications
and Information

In keeping with the thrust to build a culture of service within the Judiciary, customer service training was conducted for staff at the Court Administration Division (CAD) in the month of February. The training, facilitated by the Caribbean Centre For Organisation Development Excellence Limited (CARI-CODE), specifically geared towards improving the services offered to both court staff and members of the public by the CAD. It covered areas such as: non-verbal communications, empathetic communications and customer expectations.

The training was conducted over a four-week period and saw approximately thirty (30) persons being trained and equipped to deliver excellent customer service.

Shamika Lindsay, Legal Secretary in the Executive Office - Legal Unit, also said “the importance of customer service, internally and externally, was stressed along with the importance of remaining tactful and empathetic even in stressful situations as they arise.”

Meanwhile, Miss Gerald-Dean Martin, Systems Analyst/ Software Engineer in the ICT Division at CAD, said “the training was beneficial for me as it emphasized principles I already knew while highlighting areas which I can improve. I am happy I participated.”

The same sentiments were shared by Mrs Orleen Moore-Linton, Executive Secretary to the Director of Court Administration Division, who described the training as eye-opening.

“There were some concepts which I thought was basic, but now I realize how important it is to service delivery,” she added.

Mrs Kadiesh Fletcher, Director of Client Services, Communications and Information at the CAD, said the training came about “as a result of the commitment of the administration of the Judiciary to building the capacity of staff as they are being asked to raise the service level across the courts. Staff must be equipped to provide the service we are asking them to provide at the CAD is no different.”

Over the years, the Judiciary has been investing in training to satisfy the needs of its clients and to enhance service delivery. To this extent, the Judiciary also has a dedicated email address and telephone number for customers, suggestion boxes and a customer service charter for a smooth customer service experience.

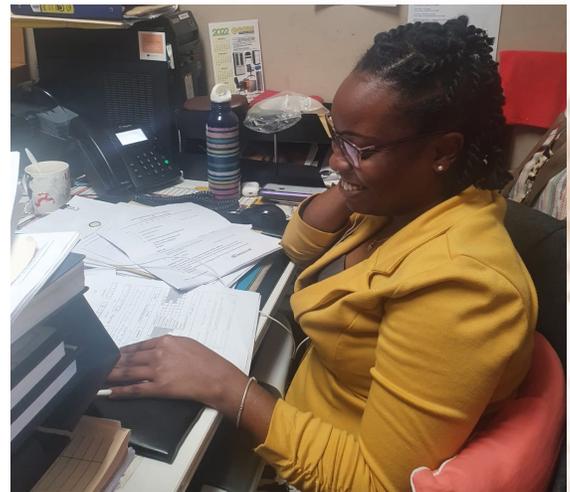
“Building a good customer experience does not happen by accident. It happens by design.”

CLARE MUSCUTT

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS: CARI-CODE CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING



Administrative Assistant in the Information Communication & Technology Division at CAD Rajeve Johnson was among the participants in the CARI-CODE Customer Service Workshop held virtually in February 2022.



Secretary in the Court Support Services Division at CAD Noelle Hamilton was all smiles during the CARI-CODE Customer Service Workshop held virtually in February 2022.



Some staff members gathered in the large conference room to participate in the CARI-CODE Customer Service Workshop to improve their knowledge and skills to enhance service delivery. The training was delivered via Zoom.



Legal Secretary Miss Shamika Lindsay listening attentively to the presenter in the CARI-CODE Customer Service Workshop held virtually in February 2022.

CHIEF JUSTICE CALLS FOR ABOLITION OF JURY TRIALS

**File Photo:**

The Honourable Mr Justice Bryan Sykes, OJ, CD
Chief Justice

Chief Justice Bryan Sykes has issued a clarion call for the abolition of jury trials due to ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to push back some criminal cases as juror boxes do not allow for physical distancing.

“As far as jury trials are concerned I think the time has come now for us to revisit whether we should retain jury trials,” Justice Sykes said during the opening of the Hilary Term of the Home Circuit Court in downtown, Kingston.

"In Jamaica, we don't seem to have a coherent policy regarding what matters are tried by the jury and what matters are not. So, if one looks at the law reports from the 1950s coming up, what you will notice over time is a policy of transferring matters from jury to bench trials," Chief Justice Sykes said.

He noted that the COVID-19 Advisory Committee examined the issue of jury trials given the increase in the positivity rate and the high transmissibility of the

Omicron variant, which is present in Jamaica. The resolution was that jury trials be delayed while stakeholders contemplate practical ways for them to resume.

Legal Challenge

In the meantime, the Chief Justice is warning that the government could face legal challenges from accused persons whose cases have been pushed back due to the inability of the courts to have jury trials. He said they could argue that their constitutional right to a fair trial within a reasonable time are being violated because of the suspension of jury trials.

"So, the executive and the legislature really need to revisit this question of jury trials, and if we are going to retain them, then we have to have all the financial resources and material resources necessary to make it work in the context of a pandemic, because it is going to be costly," he suggested.

Some defence attorneys have argued that judges are prone to being biased in favour of the prosecution even though the data from the Courts' Statistics Unit indicate otherwise. They have also opined that some judges will not be able to understand the nuances of certain issues at the community level that may be presented before the court.

According to the data, in 2017, there was a conviction rate of 39 per cent for bench trials in the Rural Circuit Courts and Gun Court; 38 per cent in 2018; and 37 per cent in 2019. While for jury trials the data show a conviction rate of 48 per cent in 2017; 45 per cent in 2018; and 47 per cent in 2019. As a result, the often-heard suggestion that judges are biased in favour of the prosecution is not borne out by the evidence.

CHIEF JUSTICE CALLS FOR ABOLITION OF JURY TRIALS

"So, there is no magic in a jury trial. The question ultimately is whether there was a fair trial, and the fairness is assessed now in light of the procedural steps leading up to the actual trial, and what happens during the actual trial process. That is really how fairness is determined, not necessarily by the mode of trial," Chief Justice Sykes emphasized.

CASES AT BROWN'S TOWN COURTHOUSE TRANSFERRED FOLLOWING FIRE

Civil and family matters at the Brown's Town Outstation in St. Ann have been relocated to the Addison Park Sports Complex after the courthouse was damaged by a massive fire on February 13, 2022. Additionally, criminal cases are being heard at the Brown's Town Police Station as a result of the blaze.

Addressing journalists following a tour of the damaged building, Chief Justice Bryan Sykes said the Court Administration Division is to engage in further dialogue with the Ministry of Justice regarding the future of the courthouse and the possibility of constructing a new facility.

The Chief Justice also disclosed that a number of files were lost in the fire.

"The impact of it [fire] as you can imagine has been very disruptive. We've lost a lot of files. We have some older files that were digitally converted back in 2016," Chief Justice Sykes said. He said efforts are underway to minimize the impact these lost files will have on court proceedings.

"This will mean we will have to be rebuilding the files, certainly from the police, and with respect to the civil matters that are before the courts, we will be reaching out to the attorneys to resubmit some of the documents they may have filed in court," the Chief Justice explained.

The Jamaica Fire Brigade continues to investigate the cause of the fire.



Chief Justice Bryan Sykes speaking with members of the Jamaica Fire Brigade during a tour of the fire-damaged building, which housed the Brown's Town courthouse in St Ann on Monday, February 14, 2022.

CAREERS IN OUR COURTS: SOCIAL WORKER



Senior Social Worker at Kingston and St Andrew Family Court Miss Audeya Fuller.

“Careers in our Courts” is a quarterly feature in our newsletter to examine how jobs within the courts are aligned to the Judiciary’s strategic objectives as outlined in its Strategic Plan – “Benchmarking the Future: Courting Success.” The strategic objectives for the courts include: significant reduction in backlog; automation of court processes and reducing delays and multiple adjournments by 2023.

Our guest for this edition is Senior Social Worker

at the Kingston and St. Andrew Family Court Miss Audeya Fuller. She joined the team at the court in 2007 as an Intake Counsellor and was promoted to Senior Social Worker in 2012.

Court Newsletter: What does a social worker do?

Audeya Fuller: The social work department is the first point of contact for the client with the court. We conduct the initial fact finding interviews with our clients to guide them in making a decision as to which of the services best suit their needs. For those clients who choose counselling and mediation as a way to resolve their problems, it is the social worker who would conduct these conflict resolution sessions. The social workers also help by providing reports and recommendations to the judges presiding over matters in an effort to help them come to a decision.

Court Newsletter: What are the requirements to become a social worker?

Audeya Fuller: A social worker should possess at least a first degree in any of the social sciences e.g. social work or psychology along with at least two (2) years’ working experience in the field.

Court Newsletter: How is your job aligned to the strategic objectives of the Judiciary?

Audeya Fuller: The Chief Justice has outlined a mission for our court system to be “the best in the Caribbean in three years and among the best globally in six years.” The social work department is a key player in

CAREERS IN OUR COURTS: SOCIAL WORKER

contributing to this strategic plan by delivering a high level of service. When we do this, we help people solve their problems through counselling instead of going through litigation. As a result, this eases the burden on the court and makes the system more efficient overall.

Court Newsletter: What is the nature of some of the matters that come before you?

Audeya Fuller: Being the first point of contact for clients in the Family Court, all matters come before the social work team. Matters requiring counselling and mediation stay with us longer. We administer various conflict resolution or therapeutic interventions, while other matters proceed to the court.

Court Newsletter: What was your first day on the job like?

Audeya Fuller: Surprisingly, I felt right at home. Before working with the court, I had the privilege of working with the then Children's Services Division (now Child Protection and Family Services Agency — CPFSA). My tenure there would have given me a good introduction to the Family Court. As time went on; however, I had some adjustments to make as the scope of the work at the court was wider than my previous exposure.

Court Newsletter: Tell me about the time when you discovered an interest in working with the court system.

Audeya Fuller: As I explained my tenure with Children Services would have exposed me to the court system. I eventually left the service to pursue my master's degree and upon my return to government service I felt I would make my contribution to the court system. Sometimes I think the court system chose me.

Court Newsletter: What do you like the most about your job?

Audeya Fuller: I enjoy the satisfaction when a client is well served and the problem they came with is resolved or improved. You see the light of hope return to their eyes, they stand a little taller and their self-confidence returns and they take the skills you have taught them and put them into action in order to sustain the improvement in their lives. That's pure joy!

Court Newsletter: What motivates you to stay focused on the job?

CAREERS IN OUR COURTS: SOCIAL WORKER

Audeya Fuller: My main motivation is my clients. I have seen the improvement in the lives that we have touched over the years and this makes me want to continue to serve in the court system.

Court Newsletter: How do you manage your day?

Audeya Fuller: That is a tough one! Due to the demand for our services, I am unable to stick to a schedule consistently. I have to be flexible in order to meet the needs of my clients.

DWIMAR PINNOCK DOMINATES SAGICOR'S TEAM BUBBLE RUN

Dwimar Pinnock, an employee of Court Administration Division (CAD), placed first in Sagicor's inaugural Sigma Team 'Bubble' Run after he clocked 24:31 in the 5.5-kilometer charity road race.

The 'team bubble' run was the first of two in-person road races for Sagicor's Sigma Corporate Run held on Sunday, March 13, 2022 in New Kingston, St. Andrew. Over 1000 fully vaccinated people were registered with corporate teams for the 'team bubble' run.

The 24-year-old Benefit Officer who works in the Human Resource Management and Administration Division at the CAD received a gift basket, a Samsung cellphone and a trophy.



Benefit Officer at CAD Dwimar Pinnock shows off his trophy after placing first in Sagicor's inaugural Sigma Team 'Bubble' Run. He finished in 24:31 in the 5.5-kilometer charity road race.

"I didn't know I won [the race] until about the Sunday night. It was confirmed on Monday when I arrived at work and everybody said to me 'you won the race!'. Since then, people have just been saying congratulations to me," a proud Mr. Pinnock told the Court Newsletter.

Interestingly, Mr. Pinnock said he did not do any special preparation for the event.

"My exercise routine was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Occasionally, I would still jog to keep in shape. Two days before the event, I changed my diet by drinking more water, increasing my carbohydrates intake and reducing fatty food," Mr. Pinnock said.

DWIMAR PINNOCK DOMINATES SAGICOR'S TEAM BUBBLE RUN (CONT'D)

He developed an interest in fitness while being a member of the National Interschool Brigade Movement at the Enid Bennett High School (formerly Bog Walk High School) in Linstead, St. Catherine.

“The National Interschool Brigade Movement was a cadet organization. As a result, I received paramilitary training and this included a lot of physical activities. I had to jog, do push-ups and whatever physical activity to be fit. That is where it started and I fell in love with fitness. After leaving school, I continue to do calisthenics exercise,” he said.

Mr. Pinnock is excited to participate in upcoming road races including the Guardian Group “Keep It Alive” 5K Night Run and the Digicel 5K Run for Special Needs. He is also encouraging more of his coworkers to participate in these running events.

He added: “These running events also present an opportunity for team building activities. At CAD, we serve some staff who work at remote locations. It would be good for them to come to these events so we can get to know them better.”

Mr. Pinnock is imploring all his colleagues to take an interest in physical activities to improve their overall health.

“I would just say to persons start small and do not look at the big gains. You can form a support group by exercising with persons with similar fitness goals. Lastly, be consistent. Consistency is very important in order for you to achieve your fitness goals,” he added.



Benefit Officer at CAD Dwimar Pinnock also received a certificate for his first place finish in the Sagicor's inaugural Sigma Team 'Bubble' Run.



Ministry of Health

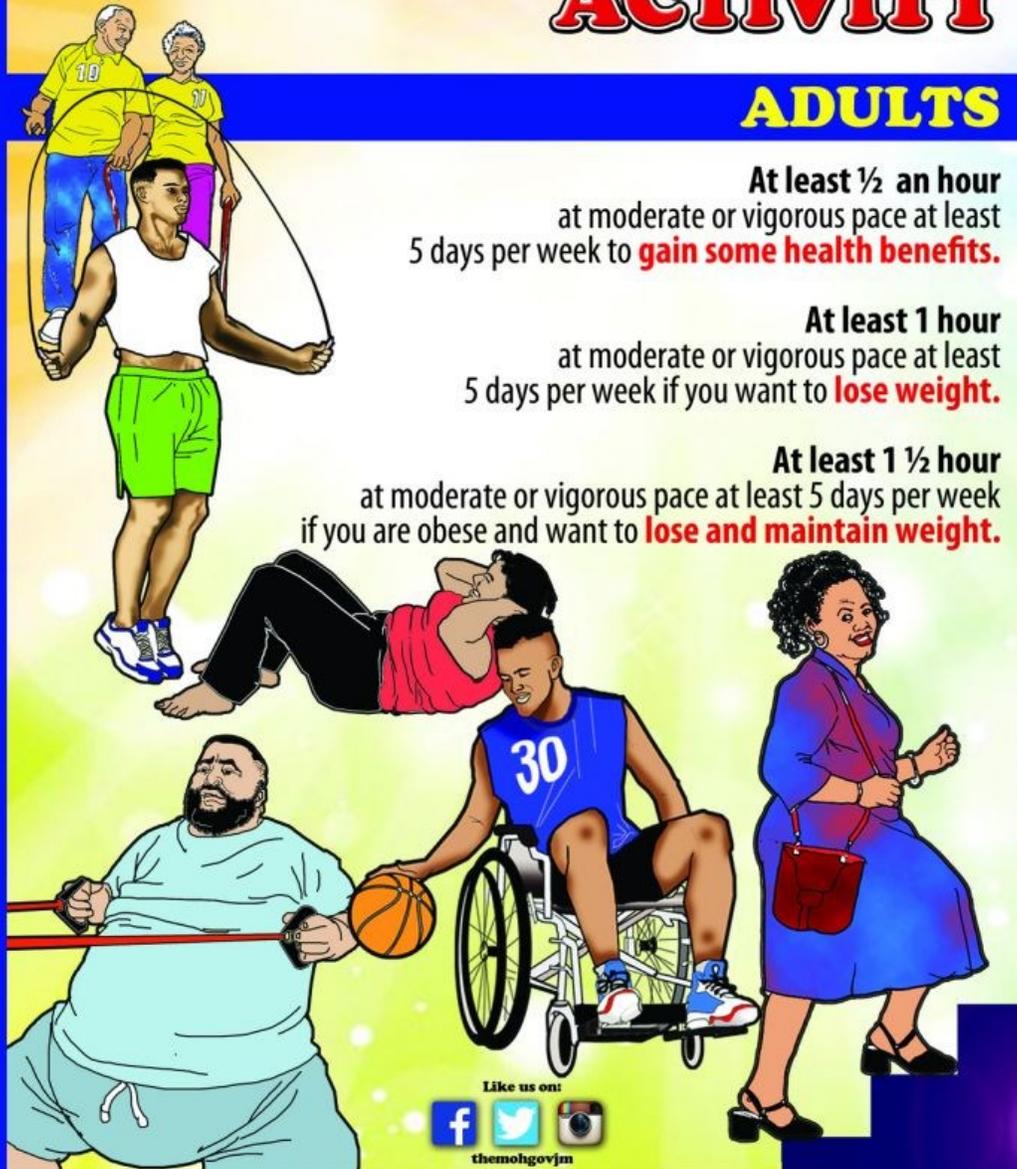
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

ADULTS

At least $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour
at moderate or vigorous pace at least
5 days per week to **gain some health benefits.**

At least 1 hour
at moderate or vigorous pace at least
5 days per week if you want to **lose weight.**

At least $1\frac{1}{2}$ hour
at moderate or vigorous pace at least 5 days per week
if you are obese and want to **lose and maintain weight.**



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