

## 'Falmouth Hospital will not be closed'

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Logan (left) and Bartley (right)

WESTERN BUREAU:

ALTHOUGH FINANCIALLY handicapped, the Western Regional Health Authority says it has no plans to downgrade or close the Falmouth Hospital.

Tatlyn Fider, Parish Manager of the Western Regional Health Authority, said despite the financial woes plaguing the health department, it is doing all in its power to maintain and improve the existing services at Falmouth Hospital.

"The Western Regional Health Authority is doing everything to keep Falmouth Hospital open and going," declared Miss Fider. "We know what the health sector is facing it's a whole financial situation which we are all plunged in."

Reverend Eron Henry, Pastor of the William Knibb Circuit of Baptist Churches in Trelawny, last week questioned whether there were moves to scale back on services at the hospital, by sidelining that health facility.

"This hospital has suffered in the past and is suffering now," said Rev. Henry. "There is a feeling that this hospital is being deliberately starved of resources so that one day it will be justifiably closed."

He lamented what he saw as the negative way in which the health facility was being treated by Government.

"There are concerns as to the standard of care at the Falmouth Hospital which is not an indictment against the staff, but the way

this hospital has been treated by the Regional Authority and the Ministry of Health," charged Mr. Henry.

#### NO STANDBY GENERATOR

He said just in the previous week, there was a report from the Senior Medical Officer that while he was conducting an operation (surgery), electricity went. "Fortunately, it went just when he was closing the incision made on a 10 year-old girl. Why is there no standby generator at the hospital?" he asked.

Responding to Reverend Henry's queries, both Miss Fider and Florence Logan, president of the Trelawny Chamber of Commerce, said the hospital would be getting a generator soon.

The hospital has been without a stand-by generator for more than 10 years. It is hoped that through the Friends of Trelawny Association, New Jersey chapter, one will be in place by September.

Matters relating to the Falmouth Hospital were placed on the table for discussion by Reverend Henry, Mrs. Logan and Miss Fider during the **Gleaner's** Editors' Forum last Thursday afternoon at the Starfish Hotel in Trelawny. The forum was aimed at examining the concerns of civic and political leaders and the police force in Trelawny and facilitating consensus on solutions for the parish.

Giving further details about the acquisition of the new generator in an interview with **The Sunday Gleaner** after the Editors' Forum, Mrs. Logan said that US\$14,000 (\$826,000) is needed to purchase the equipment which is being sourced overseas.

She noted that so far, the Friends of Trelawny Association (FOTA) has already committed US\$5,000 towards the acquisition of the item and the group had received a commitment from the Jamaican Government that it would give matching funds towards the purchase.

Also speaking at the forum, new Mayor of Falmouth, Jonathan Bartley, noted that important steps had been taken to improve drainage to reduce flooding.