



Kingston, Jamaica

May 19, 2008

ScotiaFoundation Launches \$7.5 million *Scoliosis Care* Fund

The Scotiabank Jamaica Foundation today announced the launch of *Scoliosis Care*, a programme designed to finance surgeries for children up to 18 years who are suffering from the disease. The Foundation will be spending \$7.5 million over the next five years to fund surgeries for approximately 15 children who are significantly deformed by the disease and whose families are unable to cover the cost of the screws and rods used to perform the operation.

Mrs. Joylene Griffiths Irving, Executive Director, Scotiabank Jamaica Foundation said that the Foundation's interest in this disease originated in August 2006, when it responded to the plea for financial assistance from the mother of 12 year old Nicola Noble after her surgery was postponed several times, due to a lack of funds. "*We were alarmed at the cost of the surgery and felt we needed to help those families who were unable to afford it and those children who were in such excruciating pain.*" She said this led to discussions with Head of Orthopedics at the Kingston Public Hospital, Dr. Ian Neil and the eventual creation of Scoliosis Care.

For 2008, the Foundation will disburse a total of \$2.5 million to cover the cost of 5 surgeries. The beneficiaries were announced at a launch event at the Terra Nova Hotel in Kingston on May 19. They are: 14 year old Krischion Johnson, 13 year old Britany Henry, 15 year old Tameika Morgan, 18 year old Triciana Rodney, and 15 year old Oneiki Barnes. All five beneficiaries will have their surgeries performed over the summer allowing them a period of healing before school re-opens in September.

Scoliosis is a ‘c’ or an ‘s’ shaped curvature of the spine often seen in adolescents which causes them to be bent over, or cause one shoulder to appear much higher and more pronounced than the other. Adolescent Scoliosis is most common in Jamaica, affecting teenagers between the ages of 10 to 16 years. These patients experience severe pain and respiratory complications, and are unable to participate in normal activities including attending school.

If caught early, scoliosis can be treated through physiotherapy and braces. The most efficient and effective method of correcting the spine is connecting vertebrae to vertebrae by way of titanium screws and rods, taking up to 20 screws which could range between US\$300 - US\$500 each, in an operation lasting up to 12 hours.

The Foundation is partnering with Caribbean Orthopedics Limited also known as ‘Stryker’ which develops, manufactures, and supplies specialty surgical and medical products such as orthopedic implants, including those required for spinal corrective surgery.

There is currently a list of 50 children awaiting surgery at the Kingston Public Hospital. Mrs. Griffiths Irving noted that in launching Scoliosis Care, the Foundation is hoping other corporate entities will join in by helping to finance additional surgeries and provide equipment for the hospitals.