Jamaica health minister says no reversal to smoking ban

Health Minister, Dr. Fenton Ferguson has been spearheading a series of stakeholder consultations to facilitate and assist with the implementation of the Public Health (Tobacco Control) Regulations 2013 that became effective on July 15.

KINGSTON, Jamaica, Thursday July 25, 2013 – Health Minister, Dr. Fenton Ferguson has made it clear that there will be no reversal of a decision by the Portia Simpson Miller led administration to enforce a smoking ban in public places.

Since the implementation of the ban, the Health Minister has come under pressure from the opposition Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and members of his own party who have voiced concern about the way in which the ban came into being.

In a release late Wednesday, Ferguson said he is open to suggestions on how to make the process easier for businesses and individuals.

"I want to make it clear, however, that I will not be dissuaded from implementing the ban on smoking in public places for the good health of the people of Jamaica," he said.

The minister has been spearheading a series of stakeholder consultations to facilitate and assist with the implementation of the Public Health (Tobacco Control) Regulations 2013 that became effective on July 15.

As a part of ongoing consultations, Ferguson met with Police Commission Owen Ellington on Wednesday. That meeting followed one held last Friday with members of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) in the western cit of Montego Bay. Other consultations are scheduled to take place in the coming weeks.

The regulations prohibit smoking in specified public places, including all enclosed areas accessible to the public, workplaces, places of collective use by the public; public transportation; Government-owned and occupied buildings; health facilities including pharmacies; sports and recreational facilities for use by the public; educational institutions; areas specifically for use by children and places of collective use such as bus stops. (CMC) **Click here to receive free news bulletins via email from Caribbean360. (View sample)**

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