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**Jamaica And Cuba To Hold Discussions On Anti-Viral Drug For Coronavirus**

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The Government is planning to have discussions with Cuba to get more information about its antiviral drug, Interferon Alpha 2B, which is among medications being used in the fight against the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Speaking at a press briefing at Jamaica House on Tuesday, Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr Christopher Tufton, said the discussion would focus on the drug and its effectiveness.

“Cuba and Jamaica enjoy very positive relations, and we are expecting a number of nurses to bolster our public health response towards this threat, based on the long tradition of working together that we have,” he said.

“To the extent that there is a new pharmaceutical response to COVID-19, we will be very interested to learn more about that, and so the conversation will continue in that regard,” the Tufton said.

However, Tufton advised that the country's medical team will first have to get the drug vetted by the standards agency before it is registered for use and made available to the public.

"I have had discussions with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade to enquire [about the drug], and to the extent that the drug represents a promise that has been placed in the public domain, we will certainly investigate and determine how best to use it," he added.

The Cuban antiviral drug, which is one of several being used by the Chinese to fight the virus, has proven effective for viruses with characteristics similar to those of COVID-19.

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