

## Situation in The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

### CONTEXT

On 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) a public health emergency of international concern. As of 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020, there were 9,401,995 cases and 482,596 deaths reported globally. The Region of the Americas accounted for 4,709,927 confirmed cases and 233,628 deaths.

On 15<sup>th</sup> March 2020, the first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported in The Bahamas. On 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, the first confirmed case was reported in The Turks and Caicos Islands.

### HIGHLIGHTS The Bahamas

Since 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020, there were no newly confirmed cases and no deaths from COVID-19. The last case was confirmed on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2020. There have been no new deaths since 24<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

Among total confirmed cases:

- 42 male in age groups: ≤19 (1); 20 to 39 (7); 40 to 59 (21); 60-79 (10); and ≥80 (3);
- 62 female in age groups: ≤19 (4); 20 to 39 (21); 40 to 59 (22); 60-79 (13); and ≥80 (2);
- 2373 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted;

### Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

Since 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020, there were 4 newly confirmed cases and no deaths from COVID-19.

The newly confirmed cases are in quarantine and include one returning resident, and a healthcare employee.

Among total confirmed cases:

- 1 is male in age groups: 20 to 39 (1);
- 3 are females in age groups: 20 to 39 (1); 40 to 59 (2);
- 192 persons are quarantined/home isolation;
- 530 persons have been tested for COVID-19 to date;
- 783 individuals have been released from quarantine/observation status.

### The Bahamas

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	82	8
Grand Bahama	8	2
Bimini	13	1
Cat Cay	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>11</b>

### Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Parrot Cay	2	0
Providenciales	13	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>

## SITUATION IN NUMBERS

### TOTAL CASES

104 Bahamas  
16 Turks & Caicos  
Confirmed

8 Bahamas  
4 Turks & Caicos  
Active Cases

85 Bahamas  
10 Turks & Caicos  
Recovered

0 Bahamas  
0 Turks & Caicos  
Hospitalized

1 Turks & Caicos  
Left country

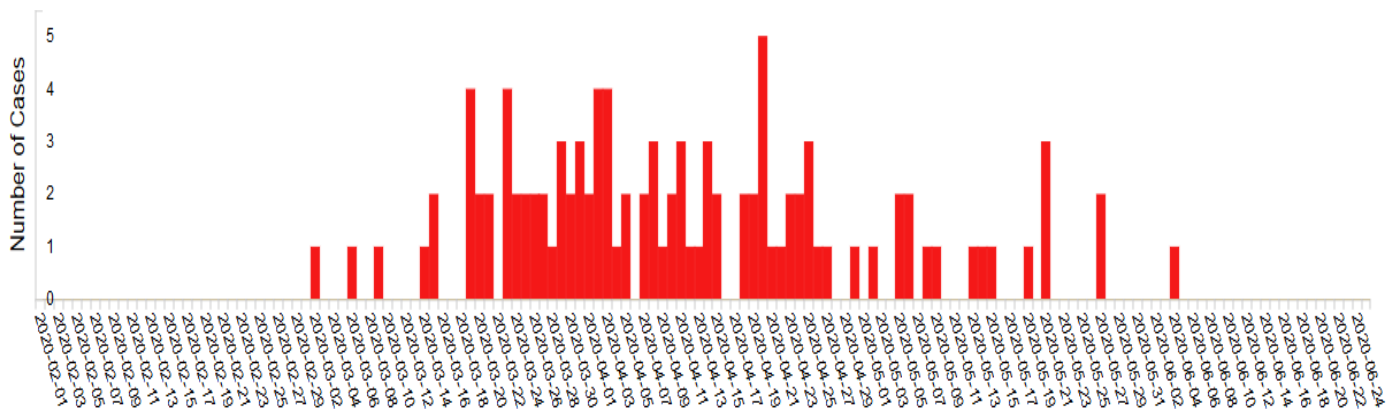
11 Bahamas  
1 Turks & Caicos  
Deaths

### PAHO RESPONSE

- ✓ Donation of laboratory supplies
- ✓ Risk assessment and situational analysis
- ✓ Investigation of HCW infection in The Bahamas
- ✓ Technical guidance
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Support to local authorities on surveillance and health systems planning

## The Bahamas

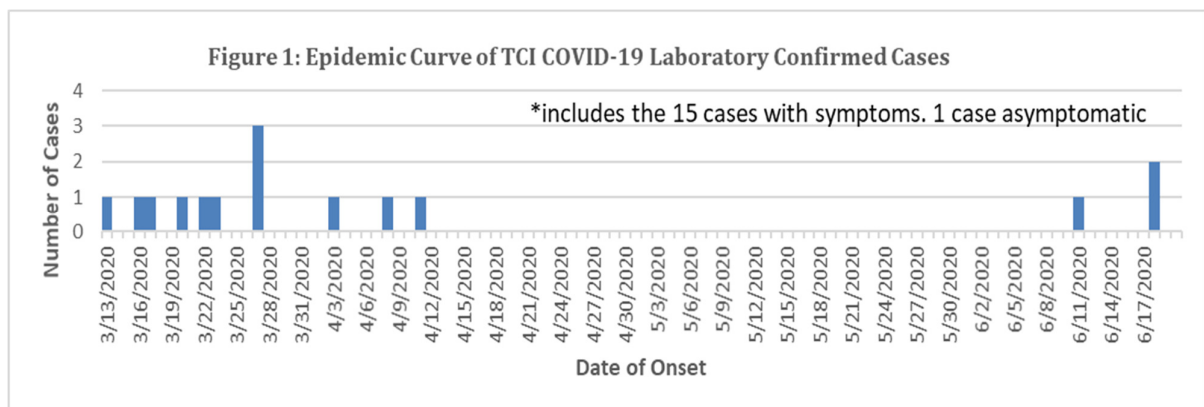
- The Emergency Orders have been extended through July 2020. Effective 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020, a 10pm to 5am curfew took effect, Mondays through Sundays. All businesses are to close by 8 pm daily.
- The country has transitioned to phase five of the plan for reopening of the economy.
- Domestic flights resumed operations on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Persons entering the country and travelling between islands are required to complete a travel and health form upon check-in to comply with public health measures of the Ministry of Health (MOH). Measures are aimed at risk assessment and to facilitate contact tracing, if needed.
- The country will transition to phase 2 of the Tourism Readiness and Recovery Plan starting 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 allowing resumption of international travel to all islands of The Bahamas. It will also allow for hotels and vacation rentals to resume operation.
- A Clean and Pristine certification program will be implemented across the country requiring all tourism-related entities to verify compliance with government-approved health and safety guidelines.
- All incoming travelers including Bahamian nationals, residents, and tourists must have a negative RT-PCR COVID19 test report done within 10 days of travel and complete and submit health forms upon entry into The Bahamas. Bahamian residents who travel outside the country for 72 hours or less may be required to quarantine for 14 days upon return but do not need a RT-PCR COVID19 test.
- Further exemptions from testing include children under age two, pilots who did not de-plane, and Bahamian Nationals returning from English speaking Caribbean countries. Temperature screenings will be conducted at air and sea ports.
- Effective 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020, gyms and spas are permitted to reopen under MOH safety protocol. Taxi services and public and private bus services will also resume at a 50% occupancy rate.
- Public beaches and parks in New Providence, Paradise Island, Grand Bahama and Bimini islands will be reopened on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Gatherings on beaches are to be five persons.
- Private social gatherings are to be 20 or less persons.
- Violations of the physical and social distancing measures will incur fines and possible closure of businesses.
- Public servants will resume work on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Teleworking arrangements will be allowed for those with certain medical conditions upon receipt of a medical certificate and a shift system may be employed for all staff for a two-month period.
- The National food Task Force distributed 12,000 parcels and 24 vouchers this past week. A total of 76,000 persons have received food assistance to date.



Confirmed COVID-19 Cases in The Bahamas by Date of Onset

## Turks and Caicos Islands

- Emergency Powers continue with nightly curfews extended to 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020 from 10:00 pm to 5:00 am. Closure of businesses on Sunday remain in effect until 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020.
- Between 22<sup>nd</sup> June and 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020, the country will be in phase 2B of reopening including essential travel for residents, social gathering of up to 25 persons. Full reopening is projected for 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020.
- The Cuban Medical Brigade that arrived on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020 for a three-month mission remain in quarantine and receive virtual orientation to the TCI hospital system and structure.
- Public Health England continue to provide support for the public health response, laboratory testing and surveillance, and will give support to the team from Cuba in integrating into the Hospital.
- As of 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020, 6400 applications have been approved for the Employee Stimulus Cash Grant and more payouts are expected.
- Ministry of Social Services continue to issue food vouchers.
- Registrar Services of the Supreme and Magistrates Courts resumed on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020.
- The Environmental Health Department is conducting assessments of the general declarations of health at the borders and inspection of businesses prior to reopening.



## NATIONAL RESPONSE

### The Bahamas Ministry of Health (MOH)

- Monitoring of health of individuals in quarantine continues through phone calls with surveillance personnel and movement is monitored using a geographical fencing and security mobile app.
- Specific entrances have been designated for patients and visitors entering the Princess Margaret Hospital to minimize person-to-person contact.
- An appointment system has been established for outpatient clinic services to ensure physical distances and infection prevention and control protocols.
- Hospitalization visits are strongly discouraged and patients are allowed one pre-approved visitor per day who must comply with physical distancing requirements. At the Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre only one visitor per patient is permitted, and all visitors must adhere to face mask, sanitation, and health declaration and interview requirements.

## Turks and Caicos Islands Ministry of Health

- An up-surge in confirmed COVID19 cases is under investigation and contact tracing, test and isolation protocols are being followed.
- In-country COVID-19 PCR testing is ongoing. To date 444 tests have been performed in-country.
- The National Testing Strategy was implemented.
- Testing is ongoing for frontline workers, suspected COVID-19 cases, contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases, persons desirous of inter-island travel, and travel outside of the country for medical purposes and other reasons.
- The MOH has developed multisectoral Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines for preparedness and response to COVID19. The guidelines address safety measures for seacrafts, use of facial masks, religious gatherings, public transportation, recreational sports, the construction sector, post pandemic cleaning in non-health care settings, reopening of tourism accommodation, reopening international ports of entry, and general cleaning and disinfecting measures.
- Continues to produce public health communication materials in English, Creole and Spanish including protecting vulnerable populations, reducing stress and coping with stigma. A notice reiterating quarantine orders were also published.
- MOH is recruiting additional medical technologists to increase the daily testing output of the National Public Health Laboratory.
- The Public and Environmental Health Regulations (2020) has made it an offence for agents to perform or offer testing without proper scrutiny and subsequent approval of the methods being used by the Ministry of Health. The Ministry of Health has received one application for testing from the private sector that is under review.
- Primary Health care clinics continue to operate on shortened hours while practicing social distancing and safety protocols.
- The National Epidemiology Research Unit is developing an online tool for COVID-19 testing registration.

## PAHO/WHO RESPONSE

PAHO continues to provide both The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands with access to updated technical guidelines and technical assistance.

### The Bahamas

- PAHO Country Office (CO) personnel remain embedded within the Bahamas' MOH Emergency Operating Centre (EOC) to provide technical advice.
- PAHO CO continues to provide technical assistance to the MOH for COVID-19 outbreak data management using the WHO Go.Data surveillance platform.

### Turks and Caicos Islands

- The CO provided communication materials for Environmental Public Health, mental health and psychosocial support, gender-based violence during crisis, and harmful alcohol use among others.

## GAPS/CHALLENGES

### The Bahamas

- Monitoring of movement of older persons via the geographical fencing and security mobile app.
- Need to expand staffing and contact tracing capacity in the Surveillance Unit.

### Turks and Caicos Islands

- No in-country intensive care capacity.