

## Situation in The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands 11<sup>th</sup> September

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 10<sup>th</sup> September 2020, there were 27,848,614 cases and 903,595 deaths reported globally. The Region of the Americas accounted for 14,447,680 confirmed cases and 501,934 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 4<sup>th</sup> September 2020, there were 428 newly confirmed cases and 13 deaths from COVID-19.

Among the new cases:

- Eighty-five percent were from New Providence;

Among total confirmed cases:

- 1241 (48%) are female and 1344 (52%) are male (data to 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020)
- 14,383 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

#### Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

Since 4<sup>th</sup> September 2020, there were 61 newly confirmed cases and no deaths from COVID-19.

Among the new cases:

- One new island, South Caicos, has reported one (1) case;

Among total confirmed cases:

- 298 (47.5%) are female and 330 (52.5%) are male (data to 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020);
- The age distribution of all cases (data to 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020) is 0-5 (4.3%), 6-19 (12.1%), 20-29 (18.8%), 30-39 (24.5%), 40-49 (22.5%), 50-59 (11.0%), 60-79 6.1(%), 80 and over (0.5%), unknown (0.3%);
- 790 persons are quarantined/home isolation;
- 2850 persons have been tested for COVID-19 to date.

### The Bahamas

| Island         | Confirmed cases | Deaths    |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------|
| New Providence | 1869            | 46        |
| Grand Bahama   | 593             | 13        |
| Abaco          | 95              | 1         |
| Berry Islands  | 15              | 1         |
| Bimini         | 54              | 2         |
| Cat Island     | 8               | 0         |
| Eleuthera      | 8               | 1         |
| Exuma          | 23              | 1         |
| Inagua         | 17              | 0         |
| Acklins        | 7               | 0         |
| Long Island    | 8               | 0         |
| Crooked Island | 5               | 0         |
| Andros         | 3               | 0         |
| Mayaguana      | 3               | 0         |
| Pending        | 106             | 0         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>2814</b>     | <b>65</b> |

### Turks and Caicos Islands

| Island         | Confirmed cases | Deaths   |
|----------------|-----------------|----------|
| Providenciales | 595             | 4        |
| North Caicos   | 19              | 0        |
| Parrot Cay     | 11              | 0        |
| Grand Turk     | 12              | 1        |
| South Caicos   | 1               | 0        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>638</b>      | <b>5</b> |

## SITUATION IN NUMBERS

### TOTAL CASES

2814 Bahamas  
638 Turks & Caicos  
Confirmed

1510 Bahamas  
362 Turks & Caicos  
Active Cases

1220 Bahamas  
270 Turks & Caicos  
Recovered

70 Bahamas  
2 Turks & Caicos  
Hospitalized

1 Turks & Caicos  
Positive Cases that Left Country

8 Bahamas  
5 Turks & Caicos  
COVID-related Deaths

8 Bahamas  
Non-COVID-related Deaths

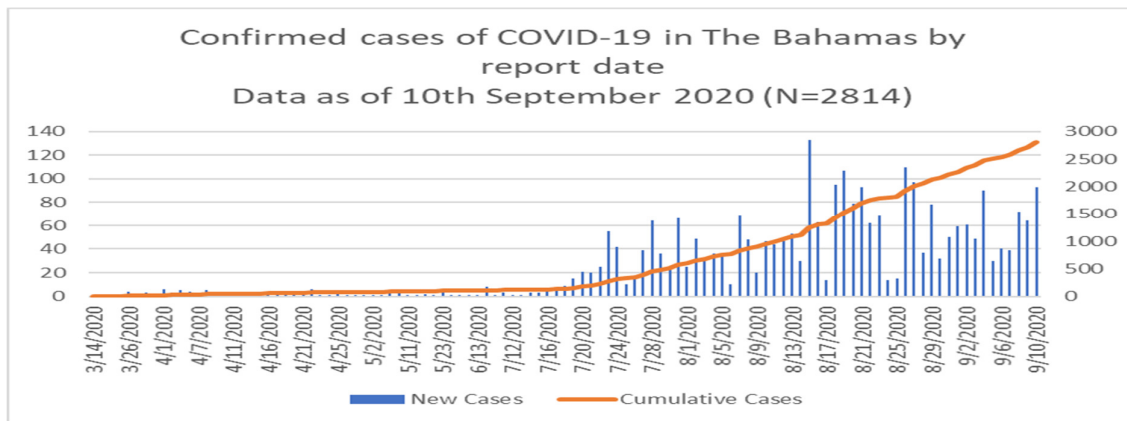
11 Bahamas  
Deaths under investigation

### PAHO RESPONSE

- ✓ Donation of laboratory supplies
- ✓ Risk assessment and situational analysis
- ✓ Technical guidance
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Support to local authorities on surveillance and health systems planning

## The Bahamas

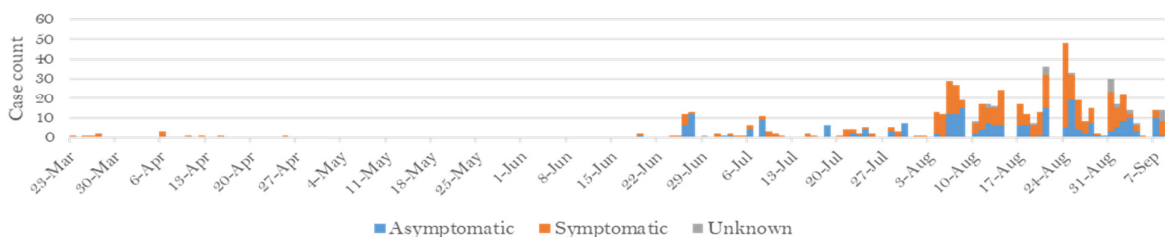
- Emergency Orders have been extended through 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.
- Effective 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020, exercise, beach and park activity resumed on New Providence from 5 am to 12:00 pm.
- Effective 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020 inter-island travel commenced. Persons travelling from New Providence will be required to provide a negative RTPCR test and quarantine for 14 days upon their arrival in other islands.
- The Royal Bahamas Police Force hosted a training for the HubCatt monitoring of persons in quarantine for COVID-19. A total of sixty-six civilians graduated from the course.
- The National Food Distribution Taskforce continues distribution and has increased the allowance to lead agencies to assist more persons.
- The United States Government, through the International Federation of Red Cross and The Bahamas Red Cross Society, pledged a donation of \$750,000 for the purchase of personal protective equipment, critical supplies, hand-washing stations, and provision of mental and psychosocial support services.



## Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

- Local economic activity resumed on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020.
- Emergency orders from 28<sup>th</sup> August 2020 remain in effect.
- The Cruise Port will remain closed until January 2021.
- Phase 1B of the Ministry of Education's phased reopening of schools commenced 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and includes the incorporation of psychosocial assessments.
- The Social Enhancement Aid Stimulus Policy for persons affected by COVID-19 was presented and discussed in Cabinet.

**Figure 1: Symptomatic and Asymptomatic TCI COVID-19 cases by date of positive test**  
March 23rd - September 9th



## **NATIONAL RESPONSE**

### **The Bahamas Ministry of Health (MOH)**

- Heightened concern remains due to steady reports of new confirmed cases, increased hospitalizations and limited bed capacity in New Providence.
- COVID-19 transmission investigations are on-going in two hospitals, the Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) and Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre (SRC).
- The Rand Memorial Hospital in Grand Bahama has been outfitted with seven beds to accommodate COVID-19 patients.
- Daily laboratory testing continues at the National Reference Laboratory, Princess Margaret Hospital and private facilities.
- The Contact Tracing Command Centre operates at one of the local hotels on New Providence, providing national coordination, identification and follow up of contacts of confirmed cases. A Contact Tracing Training has been offered through the University of The Bahamas to the general public for persons interested in assisting with contact tracing efforts.
- MOH received a donation of cellular phone devices from the Bahamas Telecommunications Corporation.
- A SharePoint platform is utilized for multiple user data entry for contact tracing, case investigations and laboratory test results whilst Go.Data is used for epidemiology analysis of a subset of exported data variables.
- Moderate to severe suspected and confirmed cases are treated at PMH or Doctors Hospital West.
- The Public Hospital's Authority continues to distribute personal protective equipment across all public hospitals and clinics.
- MOH continues to provide telepsychology, mental health, and psychosocial support services.
- MOH has initiated work to launch an immunization communication campaign to increase coverage.

### **Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) Ministry of Health**

- Contact tracing for newly detected cases is ongoing. Public health clinics on Grand Turk, North Caicos, and Providenciales continue to close daily at 1pm to allow staff to assist with contact tracing efforts.
- The Primary Healthcare Clinic on Grand Turk remained closed during the week of 7<sup>th</sup> September to carry out investigations following confirmation of cases on the island.
- The National Public Health Laboratory continues to conduct COVID-19 PCR testing and 2850 tests were completed to date. Daily laboratory testing workload has increased in parallel with increased case detections and contact tracing.
- Two private laboratories were approved to conduct COVID-19 PCR Testing for asymptomatic persons only.

## **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 personnel remain embedded within The Bahamas' MOH Emergency Operating Centre (EOC) to provide technical advice.

- Three staff members provide data management support to MOH, assisting with coordination of data entry for cases, contacts and laboratory tests and with standardizing of analysis and reporting.
- A PAHO led Infection Prevention Control Training course commenced on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2020 with 36 physicians and nurses participating from the Ministry of Health, Public Hospitals Authority, and Department of Public Health.
- PAHO's regional and country office HSS and EOC groups are advising the MOH on expanding acute care services in 3 hospitals, work flow and workplace layout to minimize risks of COVID-19 infection.

### **Turks and Caicos Islands**

- PAHO continues to provide technical assistance and access to technical guidelines, information and communication products, has advised on contact tracing and data management and made donations of Personal Protective equipment.

### **GAPS/CHALLENGES**

- Public compliance with and enforcement of public health protocols are challenges in both countries.
- Surges in travel-related cases and virus transmission among nationals and residents occurred in both countries after the re-opening of international borders, however, endemic transmission of COVID-19 currently accounts for the majority of confirmed cases in both countries.
- Tropical storms and hurricanes pose a risk to COVID-19 response efforts.

### **The Bahamas**

- Limited capacity of the health care facilities to accommodate severe cases.
- COVID-19 testing has been expanded in both the public and private sectors to cope with increased demands for testing. Coordination and timely receipt of results from all laboratories are new challenges.
- Impact on service delivery due to COVID-19 exposures and infection of healthcare workers and frontline health and security service workers and large numbers of these sector workers in quarantine.

### **Turks and Caicos Islands**

- Contact tracing has been challenging due to lack cooperation by some identified cases and limited human resources to track the growing number of contacts.
- Increase in the number of infected healthcare workers.