

## Situation in The Bahamas & Turks and Caicos Islands 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020

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 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020, there were 48,097,428 cases and 1,225,092 deaths reported globally. The Region of the Americas accounted for 21,168,405 confirmed cases and 650,705 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 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020, there were 272 newly confirmed cases, 9 deaths from COVID-19, and 2 non-COVID-19 related deaths.

Among the new cases:

- Fifty-six percent were from New Providence;
- Eleuthera almost doubled in cases since the last report-111 new cases;
- 366 (51.9%) are male and 339 (48.1%) are female.

Among total confirmed cases:

- Eighty-three percent of deaths (126) were from New Providence;
- 37,423 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

#### Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

Since 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020, there were 2 newly confirmed cases.

Among total confirmed cases:

- 339 (48.1%) are female and 366 (51.9%) are male (data 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020);
- The age distribution of all cases (data to 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020) is 0-5 (3.8%), 6-19 (12.3%), 20-29 (19.4%), 30-39 (24.5%), 40-49 (22.0%), 50-59 (10.9%), 60-79 (6.1%), 80 and over (0.7%), unknown (0.1%);
- 65 persons are quarantined/home isolation;
- 4947 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

#### The Bahamas

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	5275	126
Grand Bahama	791	17
Abaco	176	3
Eleuthera	111	1
Bimini & Cat Cay	61	2
Berry Islands	42	1
Exuma	45	1
Inagua	19	0
Andros	15	0
Long Island	11	0
Cat Island	8	0
Acklins	7	0
Crooked Island	6	0
Mayaguana	3	0
Pending	346	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6916</b>	<b>151</b>

#### Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Providenciales	649	5
North Caicos	20	0
Parrot Cay	11	0
Grand Turk	25	1
South Caicos	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>6</b>

## SITUATION IN NUMBERS

### TOTAL CASES

**6916 Bahamas**  
**705 Turks & Caicos**  
Confirmed

**1835 Bahamas**  
**7 Turks & Caicos**  
Active Cases

**4876 Bahamas**  
**Turks & Caicos**  
Recovered

**59 Bahamas**  
**0 Turks & Caicos**  
Hospitalized

**1 Turks & Caicos**  
Positive Cases that Left Country

**151 Bahamas**  
**6 Turks & Caicos**  
COVID-related Deaths

**29 Bahamas**  
Non-COVID-related Deaths

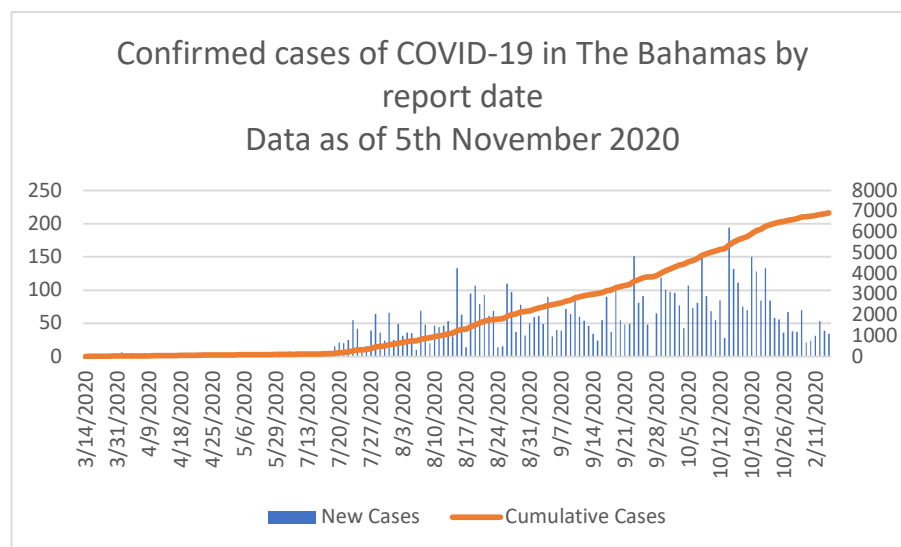
**25 Bahamas**  
Deaths under investigation

### PAHO RESPONSE

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

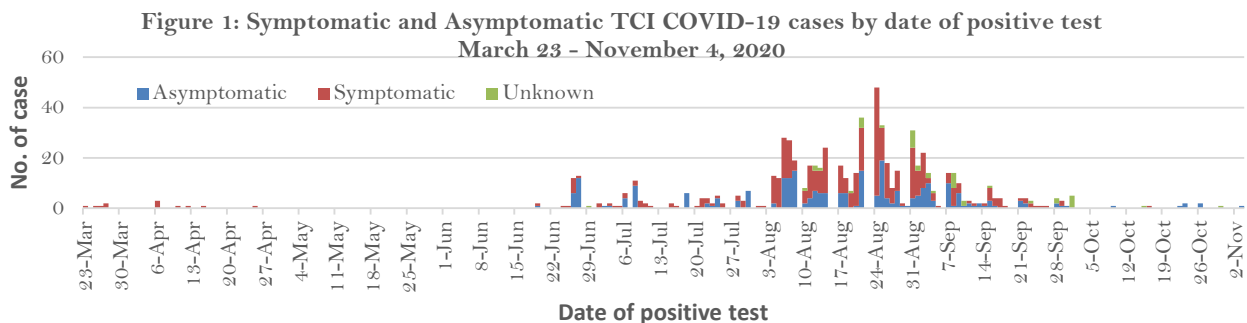
## The Bahamas

- Emergency Orders have been extended through to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020.
- Weekend lockdown will continue this weekend from 8 pm Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020 to 5 am Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020.
- Nightly curfews from Mondays to Thursdays are in place from 8:00 pm to 5:00 am.
- Beaches and parks on New Providence and Abaco reopened on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020, Mondays to Fridays only from 5 am to 8 pm. Beaches on hotel properties are open 24 hours.
- The opening of the tourism sector occurred on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020.
- The quarantine requirement of 14 days for incoming travelers including visitors, citizen and residents of The Bahamas was discontinued as of 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020. However, a documented RT-PCR negative test result obtained on a sample collected 5 days prior to travel is still required.
- Two major hotel resorts on New Providence announced reopening plans for December 2020.



## Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

- COVID-19 Control Measures extend until 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020.
- The Minister of Health pleaded for persons hosting social gatherings to limit the numbers and to discourage persons with COVID-19 symptoms from attending as well as to encourage regular handwashing and sanitization, social distancing and wearing of masks.
- Cabinet approved face to face learning for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students effective 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020.



## **NATIONAL RESPONSE**

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

- Currently, New Providence is the epi-center for COVID-19 in The Bahamas. Since the establishment of a tented facility at Princess Margaret Hospital, the situation of availability of hospital beds has improved.
- There has been an increase in newly confirmed cases in Eleuthera. A team from MOH was dispatched to the island to assess the COVID-19 situation. A Virtual Town Hall Meeting was held with members of the public in Eleuthera on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020.
- Daily laboratory testing continues at the National Reference Laboratory (NRL), Princess Margaret Hospital, Rand Memorial Hospital and private sector laboratories. A laboratory sub-committee team of the EOC has been established to discuss quality management issues. Guidance on the introduction of antigen testing was provided to the EOC.
- The Contact Tracing Command Centre is still operating and an on-line contact tracing course continues to be offered through the University of The Bahamas (UB).
- A SharePoint platform is utilized for multiple user entry of contact tracing data, case investigation 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, Doctors Hospital West and Rand Memorial Hospital.
- 150 doses of the antiviral drug, Remdesivir, were received on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020 to be used to treat moderate to severe hospitalized cases of COVID-19.
- The Public Hospital's Authority continues to distribute PPEs across all public hospitals and clinics.
- MOH continues to provide telemedicine, telepsychology, mental health, and psychosocial support services.
- MOH has launched a communication campaign to increase immunization coverage.

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

- There has been a decline in the daily number of new confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- The National Public Health Laboratory continues to conduct COVID-19 PCR testing and 4,348 tests were completed to date. Testing has been expanded to include "frontline" workers and community-based testing.
- Community drive-thru testing for COVID-19 continued in Providenciales and at "walk-up" sites on other islands. Recent confirmed cases were identified through Community-based Testing.
- GoData is being utilized for field data collection and contact tracing investigations.
- A Cuban health contingent of 20 persons continues to operate in medical facilities through a bilateral agreement between the two countries.

## **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 was completed by 36 physicians and nurses from MOH, 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 three hospitals and adjusting workflow and workplace layout to minimize risks of COVID-19 infection.
- PAHO Country Office personnel continue to participate in MOH's planning committee for developing the country's COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy and plan.

### **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 PPE. A weekly virtual meeting is convened between MOH and PAHO for discussion of the technical cooperation programme.
- A PAHO led Infection Prevention Control Training course commenced this past week and 20 personnel are enrolled in the course.

### **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, within-country 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**

- A tented patient facility donated by Samaritan's Purse increased health care capacity in New Providence. However, there are still concerns about insufficient capacity for handling 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, but improvements are being seen.
- There has been a decline in infections and isolation/quarantine of frontline health, security service and other sector workers.

### **Turks and Caicos Islands**

- The decline in confirmed cases has decreased the workload for contact tracers. The Ministry of Health has initiated community-based COVID-19 testing.
- Stigma and discrimination by public towards COVID-19 confirmed and suspected cases.