

## Situation in The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands 3<sup>rd</sup> July 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 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020, there were 10,659,782 cases and 515,155 deaths reported globally. The Region of the Americas accounted for 5,455,710 confirmed cases and 255,702 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 26<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.

- There are 4 active cases;
- None of the active cases are hospitalized.

Among total confirmed cases:

- 42 are male in age groups: ≤19 (1); 20-39 (7); 40-59 (21); 60-79 (10); and ≥80 (3);
- 62 are female in age groups: ≤19 (4); 20-39 (21); 40-59 (22); 60-79 (13); and ≥80 (2);
- 2,428 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

### Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

Since 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020, there were 28 newly confirmed cases and 1 death from COVID-19.

Among total confirmed cases:

- 18 are male and 26 are female;
- The age distribution of all cases is 0-5 (4.5%), 6-19 (18.2%), 20-29 (9.1%), 30-39 (36.4%), 40-49 (13.6%), 50-59 (9.1%), and 60-79 (9.1%).
- 3 were residents returning from countries with COVID-19 transmission, 29 were contacts of known cases, and 12 were locally transmitted without clear epidemiological links;
- 201 persons are quarantined/home isolation;
- 716 persons have been tested for COVID-19 to date;

### The Bahamas

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	82	8
Grand Bahama	8	2
Bimini	13	1
Cat Cay	1	0

### Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Parrot Cay	2	0
Providenciales	42	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>2</b>

## SITUATION IN NUMBERS

### TOTAL CASES

104 Bahamas  
44 Turks & Caicos  
Confirmed

4 Bahamas  
31 Turks & Caicos  
Active Cases

89 Bahamas  
10 Turks & Caicos  
Recovered

0 Bahamas  
2 Turks & Caicos  
Hospitalized

1 Turks & Caicos  
Left country

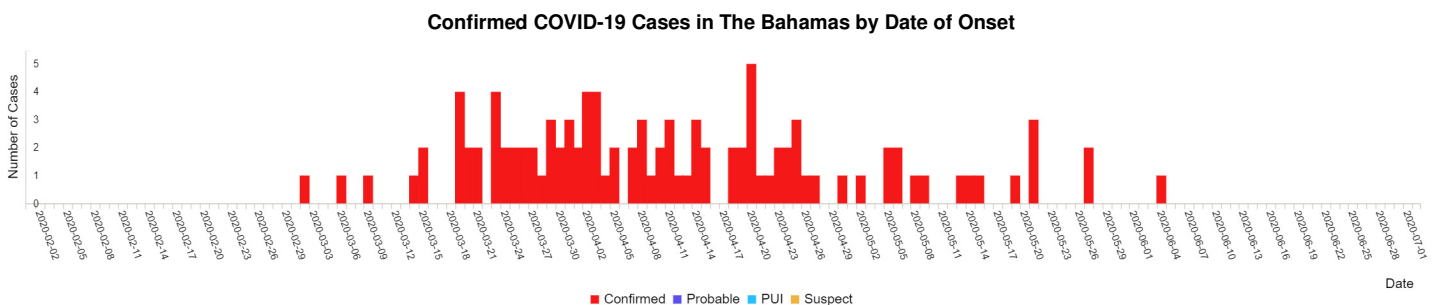
11 Bahamas  
2 Turks & Caicos  
Deaths

### 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

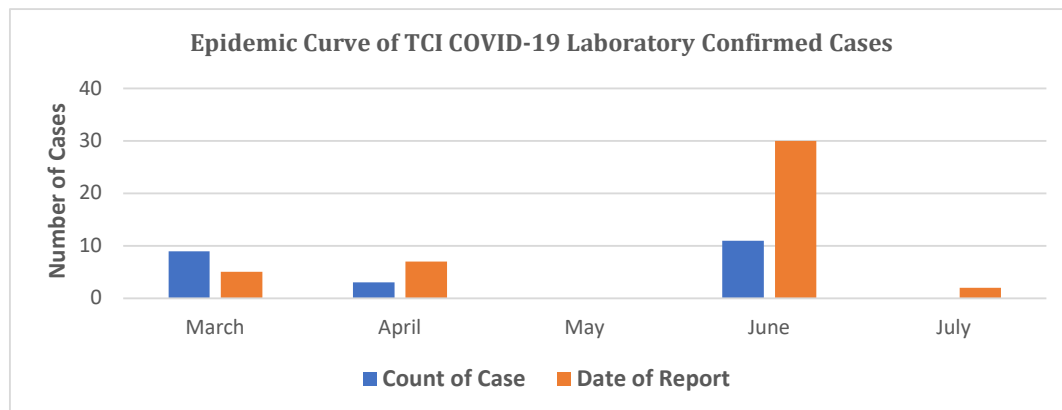
- The Emergency Orders have been extended through 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020. A 10pm to 5am curfew will remain in effect, Mondays through Sundays. All businesses are to close by 8 pm daily.
- Public beaches and parks reopened on Bimini, Grand Bahama, New Providence, and Paradise Island on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Beach gatherings are limited to groups of five persons only.
- Entry of international travelers commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020. A negative RT-PCR COVID-19 test and health questionnaire must be submitted prior to travel and upon entry into the country.
- Travelers who are exempted from submitting a negative RT-PCR test are children under age 2, pilots who have not deplaned during transit, Bahamians returning from the English-speaking Caribbean countries, and children under age 10 departing from jurisdictions where such testing is prohibited. Bahamians who have travelled internationally for less than 72 hours will not be required to submit test results but must undergo quarantine for 14 days on their return.
- Travel restrictions were lifted for passengers from China, Europe, Iran, and the Republic of Korea.
- Hotels reopened on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020. At least four major hotels have delayed opening considering the resurgence of cases in the United States of America.
- The Department of Environmental Health Services released guidance for reopening of pre-schools with protocols for infection prevention and control, use of personal protective equipment, requirements for water and air conditioning systems, and social distancing measures for classrooms and playgrounds.
- The Public Hospital's Authority launched a prescription refill programme for chronic illness medications starting 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020. WhatsApp is being used to schedule collection within 2-3 days in effort to minimize over-crowding at the hospital.
- The Ministry of Tourism has trained 8,200 persons in the tourism sector to implement health and safety protocols. An additional 5,000 persons are projected to be trained.
- Surveillance nurses are stationed at ports of entry throughout the country to further evaluate persons who are suspected of being COVID-19 positive cases.



## Turks and Caicos Islands

- Emergency Powers remain in effect. Closure of businesses on Sunday remain in effect until 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020.
- Effective 30<sup>th</sup> June-13<sup>th</sup> July 2020, the island of Providenciales is subject to the following extension of restrictions for Phase 2B of the plan for reopening:
  - Curfew will be reinstated effective 30<sup>th</sup> June through 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020 from 10pm to 5am daily.

- Businesses like hotels, restaurants and gyms will reopen 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020.
- Social gatherings and beach gatherings are to be limited to a maximum of 10 persons from the same household.
- Travel from Providenciales to other islands is restricted to essential services only, and with social distancing and travel logging protocols implemented by airlines.
- Other islands will move to Phase 3 of the COVID19 Recovering Plan starting 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020.
- All airports remain closed except to travelers who are Turks and Caicos Islanders, British Overseas Territories, Permanent Residents and Residents Permit Holders. All persons returning will be placed in quarantine for 14 days.
- The Providenciales airport and private jet terminal are projected to reopen for international travel on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020. Incoming international travelers will be required to have a negative RT-PCR COVID-19 test 72 hours prior to departure, proof of medical/travel insurance and must complete a health screening questionnaire. A 14-day quarantine will not be mandatory.
- The TCI Government Assured Program and Portal is expected to launch imminently which will allow visitors to receive a TCI Assured Certification sticker as proof that all health-related criteria were submitted and approved prior to travel.
- The Grand Turk Cruise Center will remain closed until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020.



## NATIONAL RESPONSE

### The Bahamas Ministry of Health (MOH)

- MOH has partnered with PAHO and the University of the Bahamas to develop a virtual contact tracing training course to train 100 persons selected from multiple islands of the country.
- MOH partnered with the armed forces, the Office of the Attorney General, and Data Protection to monitor individuals in self quarantine using a geographical fencing and security mobile app.
- MOH partnered with the Ministry of Tourism to develop a hotline for use by tourists lodging in hotels and vacation properties.
- MOH received RNA extraction kits (for 10,000 samples) from the Government of the Turks and Caicos Island.
- MOH has developed an electronic platform for the issuance of health visas to applicants who submit negative RT-PCR test results from a certified laboratory.

- MOH has developed a scale of stratifiers to assess the level risk of travelers may pose of potentially transmitting COVID-19.

### **Turks and Caicos Islands Ministry of Health**

- In-country COVID-19 PCR testing is ongoing by the National Public Health Laboratory and 706 tests have been performed in-country. One application is under review by the government for COVID-19 testing to be performed in the private sector.
- 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 or other reasons.
- TCI Continues to produce public health communication materials in English, Creole and Spanish including messages for vulnerable populations, about coping with stress and reiterating quarantine safety measures.
- MOH issued an advisory to discontinue use of hand sanitizers made with methanol.
- Safety protocols for reopening have been completed for Government agencies, airport, hotel, and restaurant partners.
- MOH conducted refresher training for health care providers on response protocols for Infection Prevention and Control.

### **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.

### **GAPS/CHALLENGES**

The potential for a resurgence of cases is a concern for both countries as restrictions on international travel are gradually relaxed.

#### **The Bahamas**

- Limited staffing in the Surveillance Unit. A trained epidemiologist and public health nurses are needed.

#### **Turks and Caicos Islands**

- No in-country intensive care capacity.
- Long lead times in supply chain for procurement and delivery of medical supplies.
- Limited surge capacity in secondary care including bed space and human resources which are being addressed regionally and in collaboration with the United Kingdom Government.