



## COVID-19 SITUATION UPDATE #17

8 August 2020

### I. HIGHLIGHTS

#### **Trinidad and Tobago**

At the Virtual Media Conference on COVID-19, held on Monday 3 August 2020, the Health Minister, Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh confirmed that there will be a virtual meeting with regional/international stakeholders on Wednesday 5 August 2020, to discuss the financing and policy allocations for vaccines, as well as therapeutics and diagnostics to treat with COVID-19. The Minister called for cooperation from the public in assisting officials in their contact tracing efforts, as people play an important role in contact tracing and they must be truthful when asked for information. People can be assured that patient confidentiality is top priority and contact tracers are trained.

The Technical Director, Epidemiology Division at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Avery Hinds, noted from the data on contact tracing related to recent COVID-19 cases occurred in people who shared households, workplaces, social spaces (bars etc.) and schools (from adults who passed on to their children who then went to school). He urged the adults to be responsible. As much as nine schools have been closed as a result of links to COVID-19 in the school population, including adults who tested positive and minors who are students and who tested positive.

At the Virtual Media Conference on COVID-19, held on Saturday 8 August 2020, the Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Roshan Parasram, noted some changes in the demography of COVID-19 patients in Phase One (11 March – 26 April 2020) and Phase Two (27 April – 6 August 2020). The following is the breakdown:

- During Phase One more females were affected: 41.4% COVID-19 positive males and 58.6% positive females in comparison to Phase Two where more males were affected: 58.1% COVID-19 positive males and 41.9% positive females.
- In Phase One, persons in their mid-50s to 60s accounted for the majority of COVID-19 cases in comparison to Phase Two, where children as well as persons in their 20s, 30s and 40s accounted for most cases.

Dr. Parasram also explained that there is a change in reporting the cases, which resulted in a lag of 7 days. He said unfortunately, the reporting of positive cases had also been "batched." Going forward, the report will state the date the COVID-19 sample was collected and not the date the lab sent the report. As a means of quality assurance, positive COVID-19 results emanating from the recently established UWI Lab were sent to the Trinidad Public Health Lab and then to the

### **SITUATION IN NUMBERS** **(as of 8 August 2020)**

**Trinidad and Tobago**  
275 Confirmed Cases  
8 Deaths  
135 Discharges

**Aruba**  
396 Confirmed Cases  
3 Deaths  
114 Discharges

**Curaçao**  
31 Confirmed Cases  
1 Death  
28 Discharges

**Sint Maarten**  
176 Confirmed Cases  
16 Deaths  
86 Discharges

**Bonaire**  
5 Confirmed Cases  
0 Death  
2 Discharges

**St. Eustatius**  
3 Confirmed Cases  
0 Death  
2 Discharges

**Saba**  
5 Confirmed Cases  
0 Death  
3 Discharges

Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) for further confirmation.

### **Dutch Territories**

As of 7 August 2020, the total number of positive cases in **Aruba** increased to 396 (382 residents and 14 visitors). This is a dramatic increase from the week before ending 30 July when the total was 121.

On 5 August 2020, the Government closed all bars, rum shops and nightclubs. Private parties have also been prohibited, visits to retirements homes have been suspended, all indoor group sports have been cancelled, live music activities with a band or DJ have been cancelled and gatherings of more than 4 persons in a public space are prohibited.

In **Curaçao** the COVID-19 cases remain at 31. Travelers who have been in the United States within the past 14 days are not allowed to enter Curaçao, only residents of Curaçao who would have received specific permission from the Government. Anyone travelling from Aruba to Curaçao must apply for a permit to enter and enter into mandatory quarantine for 14 days. They are also responsible for paying the costs of the mandatory quarantine and including any possible costs incurred in the isolation period as well as the cost for the PCR test. Curaçao has not yet announced when flights to and from the United States will resume, but most U.S. Airlines have cancelled flights until September 2020.

In **Sint Maarten**, as of 7 August 2020, the number of new cases rose from 49 to 74 and increased to a total number of 176. Sint Maarten also recorded an additional death. As the country continues to conduct contact tracing this figure is expected to increase. The Government continues to stress the importance of wearing masks, social distancing and washing your hands with soap or using proper hand-sanitizers as the main steps for reducing the spread and flattening the curve. The orange travel advisory set by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Hague is still in effect.

**Saba** remains at what they call an alert level of 2 which mandates physical distancing, proper hand and cough hygiene and a maximum grouping of 25 persons. A central quarantine location for persons traveling from high risk areas has been established. Because Sint Maarten is still considered to be high risk, before entering Saba a negative test result is required and mandatory quarantine in the central location. Persons transiting through Sint Maarten to Saba must go into quarantine upon arrival. ZVK (the health insurance company) will refer patients as much as possible to Bonaire or Curaçao. As these islands have no community spread of COVID-19, patients do not have to quarantine upon their return to Saba. On 6 August 2020, **Bonaire** limited travel between Aruba and Bonaire. Non-essential travel between the two islands is discouraged and those persons who travel must be quarantined for 14 days upon arrival in Bonaire. The airspace between Bonaire and Sint Maarten remains closed.

**Sint Eustatius'** total number of cases remains at 3. The country now requires that persons take a COVID-19 test less than 72 hours before travelling to Statia. Home base quarantine is only allowed in places approved by the public health. Everyone traveling from medium or high risk countries must receive approval before travelling. More information can be found on:

<https://www.statiagovernment.com/key-topics/covid-19/travel-and-quarantine-policy>

**3rd Tranche of COVID-19 support from The Netherlands** — Aruba has signed with the Netherlands and working on fulfilling the requirements. Curaçao has signed but key tensions still exist on island and tensions with the Netherlands are growing.

## II. SITUATION SUMMARY

**Table 1. COVID-19 Status in Trinidad and Tobago, Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Marten, Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba, 8 August 2020**

Country	# Confirmed Cases	# Deaths	# Tests Conducted	# Discharges	Transmission Type	Non-pharmacological Interventions			
						Travel Restrictions	Schools closed	Essential Services	Other
<b>Trinidad and Tobago</b>	275	8	10,609	135	Clusters of Cases	Yes	Yes	No	Physical distance, the use of cloth masks in public spaces, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, no touching of face, restriction of gathering (25 persons) and restricted hours for bars.
<b>Aruba</b>	120	3	10320	100	Cluster of Cases/	Yes	Yes	Lifted	Physical distance, the use of cloth masks in public spaces, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, no touching of face. Borders opened between Curaçao, Europe, the United States and Canada.
<b>Curaçao</b>	29	1	Not available this week	23	Sporadic Cases	Yes	Yes	Lifted	Physical distance, the use of masks in public spaces, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, no touching of face . Borders open to Holland, and key places in Europe. They have limited access to Aruba and Sint Maarten
<b>Sint Maarten</b>	128	15	722	63	Cluster of Cases	Yes	Yes	Lifted	Physical distance, the use of cloth masks in public spaces, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, no touching of face Borders open to Aruba and Curaçao, Canada and Europe.
<b>Bonaire</b>	5	0	New total not available this week	2	Sporadic Cases				Physical distancing and hygiene requirements have been maintained. Borders open to Curaçao and some European countries but they have limited access from Aruba and Sint Maarten
<b>St. Eustatius</b>	3	0	Not available	2	Sporadic Cases	Yes	Yes	Lifted	Physical distancing and hygiene requirements have been maintained Borders open to BES islands and Sint Maarten with restrictions
<b>Saba</b>	5	0	176	3	Sporadic Cases	Yes	Yes	Re-instated	Physical distancing and hygiene requirements have been reinstated. Borders open to BES islands and Curaçao but not Sint Maarten.

### III. RESPONSE

#### A. Key Trinidad and Tobago/Response to COVID-19, 8 August 2020

The Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Keith Rowley, made the following announcements during a media conference held at the Diplomatic Centre, St Ann's, on Wednesday, 05 August 2020:

- Government will continue to monitor the data provided by the Ministry of Health to determine whether schools will reopen as planned on 1 September 2020. Elements of risk control and risk management will be considered during this review process.
- He urged citizens to adhere to the public health regulations implemented to fight against the COVID-19 virus.
- No decision has been made to close or reduce the operating hours of bars or restaurants. However, they will be subject to increased monitoring in the coming weeks. He has instructed the Minister of National Security to liaise with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service to ensure the enforcement of the law at these establishments to curb the spread of the virus.
- The rotation of the Public Service at 50% in the workplace will continue in a bid to limit the spread of COVID-19.
- The 2020 General Elections, on 10 August 2020, will not be postponed.
- The Ministry of Finance will provide \$200,000USD to Trinidad and Tobago Consulates in New-York, Miami, Washington and London to assist nationals abroad.
- Approximately 100 nationals are expected to return from the United States on Saturday, 8 August 2020. Ninety-five nationals are also expected to return from the United Kingdom.

#### B. Key PAHO/WHO Trinidad and Tobago, Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten, Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba Response to COVID-19, 27 June 2020

- Regional ***Breastfeeding and COVID-19*** Facebook live Panel Discussion conducted
- Regional ***Breastfeeding and COVID-19*** Webinar conducted

### IV. NEEDS

- COVID-19 Tests (Extraction and Amplification Kits as well as Enzymes)
- Nasopharyngeal swabs
- Personal Protective Equipment

## V. GAPS/CHALLENGES

- Lack of continuous supply of RNA extraction kits which also remains a principal challenge at the regional level
- Nasopharyngeal swabs are difficult to obtain as there are overall production and shipping challenges
- Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten continue to negotiate with the Kingdom Council of Ministers about the restrictions being placed on the countries as they access the 3rd tranche of COVID-19 funding from the Netherlands.

## VI. REFERENCES

- Ministry of Health, Trinidad and Tobago: <http://www.health.gov.tt/>
- Aruba: <https://www.arubacovid19.org/>
- Sint Maarten: <https://vromi-sxm.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opstdashboard/index.html#/285fa99a4fc442fcb4a71ea7297d1ec6>
- Saba: <http://www.sabagovernment.com/index.html>