

Situation in The Bahamas & Turks and Caicos Islands 2nd October 2020

On 30th January 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) a public health emergency of international concern. As of 25th September 2020, there were 33,960,038 cases and 1,014,149 deaths reported globally. The Region of the Americas accounted for confirmed 16,743,243 cases and 559,471 deaths.

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

HIGHLIGHTS

The Bahamas

Since 25th September 2020, there were 521 newly confirmed cases and 10 deaths from COVID-19.

Among the new cases:

- Ninety-one percent were from New Providence;

Among total confirmed cases:

- Seventy-six percent of deaths (73) were from New Providence;
- 243 healthcare workers;
- 20,835 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

Since 25th September 2020, there were 11 newly confirmed cases and one death from COVID-19.

Among total confirmed cases:

- 332 (48.2%) are female and 357 (51.8%) are male (data to 30th September 2020);
- The age distribution of all cases (data to 30th September 2020) is 0-5 (3.9%), 6-19 (12.2%), 20-29 (18.7%), 30-39 (24.8%), 40-49 (22.4%), 50-59 (11.0%), 60-79 (6.1%), 80 and over (0.7%), unknown (0.1%);
- 164 persons are quarantined/home isolation;
- 3378 persons have been tested for COVID-19 to date.

The Bahamas

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	3099	73
Grand Bahama	635	17
Abaco	145	1
Berry Islands	15	1
Bimini	54	2
Cat Island	8	0
Eleuthera	22	1
Exuma	32	1
Inagua	19	0
Acklins	7	0
Long Island	12	0
Crooked Island	5	0
Andros	8	0
Mayaguana	3	0
Pending	156	0
TOTAL	4220	96

Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Providenciales	638	5
North Caicos	19	0
Parrot Cay	11	0
Grand Turk	21	1
South Caicos	1	0
TOTAL	690	6

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

TOTAL CASES

4220 Bahamas
690 Turks & Caicos
Confirmed

1803 Bahamas
35 Turks & Caicos
Active Cases

2290 Bahamas
648 Turks & Caicos
Recovered

93 Bahamas
2 Turks & Caicos
Hospitalized

1 Turks & Caicos
Positive Cases that Left Country

96 Bahamas
6 Turks & Caicos
COVID-related Deaths

16 Bahamas
Non-COVID-related Deaths

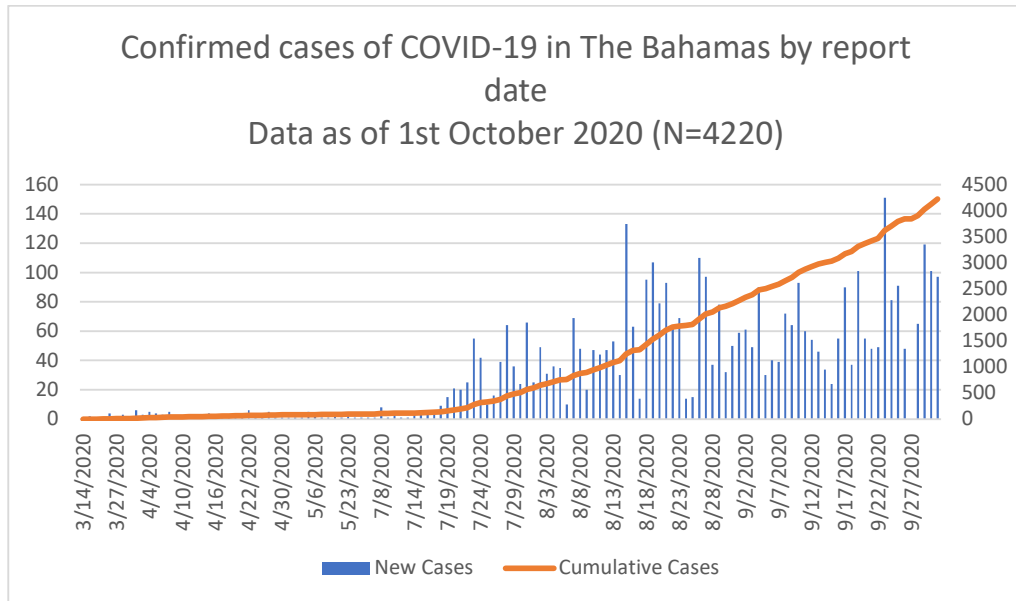
15 Bahamas
Deaths under investigation

PAHO RESPONSE

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

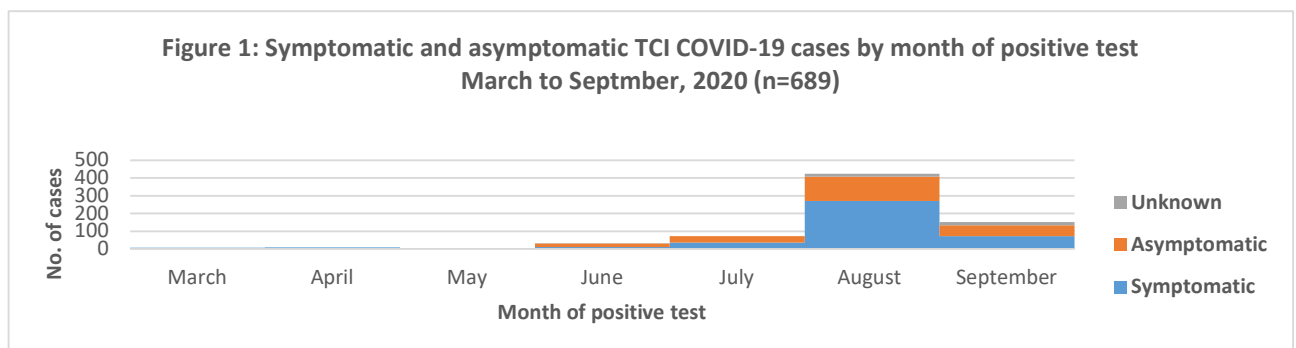
The Bahamas

- Emergency Orders have been extended through to 31st October 2020.
- Public schools will reopen on 5th October 2020 with a National Orientation for all schools conducted throughout the week via face to face sessions.
- Changes were announced for incoming travelers commencing 1st November 2020. Travelers must:
 - Provide a negative RT-PCR COVID-19 test not older than seven days prior to travel;
 - Apply for and provide a travel health visa at port of entry;
 - Take a Rapid COVID-19 Antigen test at the port of entry;
 - Repeat the Rapid COVID-19 Antigen Test on day five if they are not departing on that day.



Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

- Emergency Orders have been extended through to 14th October 2020.
- Public Health Control Regulations under the Order include the following:
 - Curfew on all islands from 8pm to 5am daily;
 - Business closures by 7pm;
 - Bars and restaurants and places of worship (logbook) maintain maximum occupancy of 30%;
 - Only essential travel permitted for domestic travel;
 - Outdoor public gatherings only with a maximum of 25 persons.
- Acceptance of new applications for the Coronavirus Business commenced 1st October 2020.



NATIONAL RESPONSE

The Bahamas Ministry of Health (MOH)

- Currently, New Providence is the epi-center for COVID-19 in The Bahamas. Heightened concern remains due to on-going reports of new confirmed cases and deaths, increased hospitalizations and limited bed capacity in New Providence.
- Workplace exposures to COVID-19 are increasing and often requires closure of the entity for deep cleaning and sanitization and quarantine of all or some employees.
- Additional staff including physicians, nurses, and laboratory personnel have started work or will commence duty shortly to assist in the COVID-19 response efforts.
- COVID-19 transmission investigations are on-going in two hospitals, the Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) and Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre (SRC).
- Additional wards at PMH have been identified and utilized since 29th September 2020 to care for COVID-19 patients.
- Daily laboratory testing continues at the National Reference Laboratory (NRL), Princess Margaret Hospital, Rand Memorial Hospital and private facilities.
- Validation efforts are in progress for saliva testing of COVID-19 by the NRL.
- The Contact Tracing Command Centre continues operations and an on-line contact tracing course is being offered through the University of The Bahamas (UB).
- 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 PPEs across all public hospitals and clinics.
- MOH continues to provide telemedicine, telepsychology, mental health, and psychosocial support services.
- MOH has initiated work to launch 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.
- Contact tracing for newly detected cases is ongoing.
- The Oxygen Generator is undergoing installation and will be used to assist with oxygen therapy and ventilation needs of COVID-19 patients
- The National Public Health Laboratory continues to conduct COVID-19 PCR testing and 3378 tests were completed to date.
- Go.Data is being utilized for field data collection and contact tracing investigations.
- A team from Public Health England arrived in country to assist with ongoing COVID-19 response efforts.
- A Cuban health contingent of 20 persons continue to provide assistance in medical facilities through 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 commenced on 6th 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 three hospitals and adjust workflow and workplace layout to minimize risks of COVID-19 infection.
- PAHO made a donation of PPE to a vulnerable group, refugees.

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.

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 most of the 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.
- Stigma and discrimination by public towards COVID-19 confirmed and suspected cases.