

## Situation in The Bahamas & Turks and Caicos Islands 25<sup>th</sup> September 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 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020, there were 31,913,793 cases and 977,479 deaths reported globally. The Region of the Americas accounted for confirmed 15,987,906 cases and 540,774 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 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020, there were 522 newly confirmed cases and 17 deaths from COVID-19.

Among the new cases:

- Eighty-four percent were from New Providence;

Among total confirmed cases:

- 0-39 years account for 48% cases (data to 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020);
- Seventy-four percent of deaths (56) were from New Providence (data to 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020);
- 18,604 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

#### Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

Since 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020, there were 16 newly confirmed cases and no deaths from COVID-19.

Among total confirmed cases:

- 325 (48.1%) are female and 351 (51.9%) are male (data to 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020);
- The age distribution of all cases (data to 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020) is 0-5 (4.0%), 6-19 (12.3%), 20-29 (18.6%), 30-39 (25.0%), 40-49 (22.3%), 50-59 (10.8%), 60-79 (6.2%), 80 and over (0.6%), unknown (0.1%);
- 273 persons are quarantined/home isolation;
- 3079 persons have been tested for COVID-19 to date.

### The Bahamas

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	2625	63
Grand Bahama	625	17
Abaco	134	1
Berry Islands	15	1
Bimini	54	2
Cat Island	8	0
Eleuthera	22	1
Exuma	27	1
Inagua	19	0
Acklins	7	0
Long Island	12	0
Crooked Island	5	0
Andros	6	0
Mayaguana	3	0
Pending	137	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3699</b>	<b>86</b>

### Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Providenciales	631	4
North Caicos	19	0
Parrot Cay	11	0
Grand Turk	17	1
South Caicos	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>5</b>

## SITUATION IN NUMBERS

### TOTAL CASES

**3699 Bahamas**  
**679 Turks & Caicos**  
Confirmed

**1626 Bahamas**  
**71 Turks & Caicos**  
Active Cases

**1962 Bahamas**  
**602 Turks & Caicos**  
Recovered

**90 Bahamas**  
**3 Turks & Caicos**  
Hospitalized

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

**86 Bahamas**  
**5 Turks & Caicos**  
COVID-related Deaths

**13 Bahamas**  
Non-COVID-related Deaths

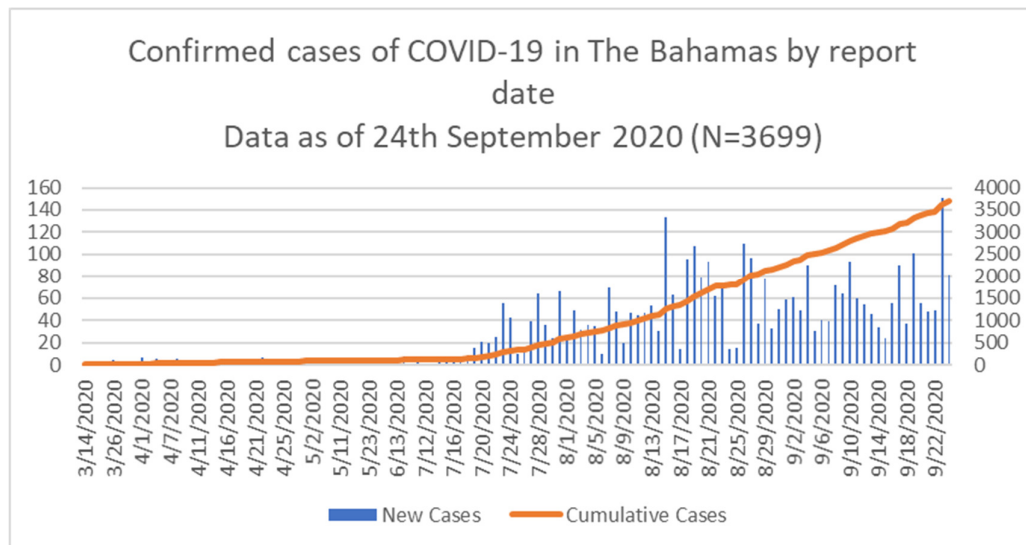
**12 Bahamas**  
Deaths under investigation

## PAHO RESPONSE

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

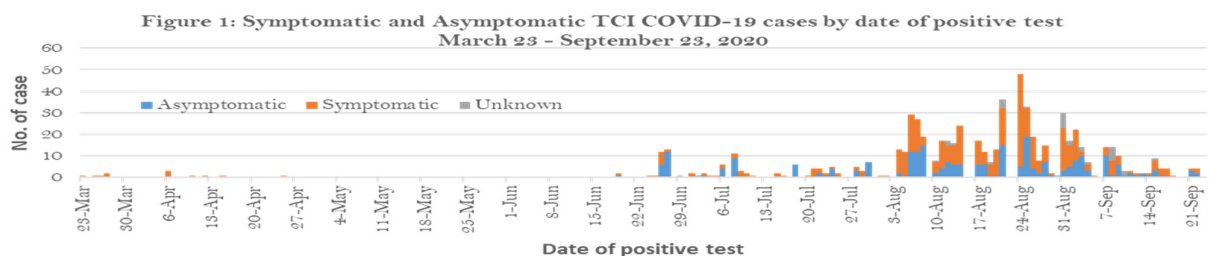
## The Bahamas

- While Emergency Orders have been extended through to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020, a Pandemic Resolution was put forth in parliament this week for a further extension through to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020.
- Amendments to the Emergency Orders include the following:
  - All islands except Abaco and New Providence to resume normal activities with appropriate protocols;
  - Curfew to remain for Abaco, Grand Bahama, and New Providence from 10 pm to 5 am daily;
  - Beaches on Grand Bahama and New Providence only open from 5 am to 12 noon;
  - Weddings and funerals are permitted in religious facilities on all islands.
  - Wedding receptions are only permitted outside on Abaco and New Providence and indoor/outdoor on all other islands;
  - Graveside services are permitted and are restricted to 10 persons on Abaco and New Providence and 30 persons on all other islands;
  - Repasts are permitted on all islands except Abaco and New Providence with a maximum of 20 persons;
  - Gyms may reopen on all islands and are subject to inspection by Ministry of Health personnel.



## Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

- Emergency Orders have been extended through to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.
- The COVID-19 Taskforce commenced work this past week and enforced regulations of the Emergency Orders by administering more than 35 tickets to violators.
- Schools continue to operate virtually based in the current phase (Phase 2) of the Ministry of Education's phased reopening of schools.



## **NATIONAL RESPONSE**

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

- Heightened concern remains due to on-going reports of new confirmed cases and deaths, 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).
- Daily laboratory testing continues at the National Reference Laboratory, Princess Margaret Hospital, Rand Memorial Hospital and private facilities.
- The Contact Tracing Command Centre continues operations and an on-line contact tracing course is being offered through the University of The Bahamas (UB).
- MOH received a donation of PPE through a Canadian Government grant to PAHO through which \$677,00 Canadian dollars are being spent on BHS to provide PPEs, laboratory supplies, and, support the development of the online contact tracing that is currently being offered through 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 National Public Health Laboratory continues to conduct COVID-19 PCR testing and 3079 tests were completed to date.
- Additional hospital beds have been procured to expand in-patient capacity in public hospitals.
- An Oxygen Generator arrived in country and will be used to assist with oxygen therapy and ventilation needs of COVID-19 patients.
- Go.Data is being utilized for field data collection and contact tracing investigations.
- 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 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 three hospitals and adjust workflow and workplace layout to minimize risks of COVID-19 infection.
- The National Reference Laboratory received PAHO donations of primers and probes sufficient for 30,000 real time PCR tests on 25 September 2020.

### **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.