

## Situation in The Bahamas & Turks and Caicos Islands 9<sup>th</sup> October 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 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020, there were 36,129,369 cases and 1,053,092 deaths reported globally. The Region of the Americas accounted for confirmed 17,512,753 cases and 580,189 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 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020, there were 644 newly confirmed cases, 6 deaths from COVID-19, and 3 non-COVID-19 related deaths.

Among the new cases:

- Eighty-seven percent were from New Providence;

Among total confirmed cases:

- Seventy-six percent of deaths (78) were from New Providence;
- 23,971 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

#### Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

Since 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020, there were 5 newly confirmed cases which were reported on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020.

Among total confirmed cases:

- 335 (48.2%) are female and 360 (51.8%) are male (data to 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020);
- The age distribution of all cases (data to 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020) is 0-5 (3.9%), 6-19 (12.2%), 20-29 (19.0%), 30-39 (24.7%), 40-49 (22.2%), 50-59 (11.1%), 60-79 (6.0%), 80 and over (0.7%), unknown (0.1%);
- 81 persons are quarantined/home isolation;
- 3593 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

#### The Bahamas

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	3660	78
Grand Bahama	653	17
Abaco	157	2
Berry Islands	17	1
Bimini	54	2
Cat Island	9	0
Eleuthera	25	1
Exuma	33	1
Inagua	19	0
Acklins	7	0
Long Island	12	0
Crooked Island	5	0
Andros	9	0
Mayaguana	3	0
Pending	201	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4864</b>	<b>102</b>

#### Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Providenciales	639	5
North Caicos	19	0
Parrot Cay	11	0
Grand Turk	25	1
South Caicos	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>695</b>	<b>6</b>

## SITUATION IN NUMBERS

### TOTAL CASES

4864 Bahamas  
695 Turks & Caicos  
Confirmed

2084 Bahamas  
17 Turks & Caicos  
Active Cases

2646 Bahamas  
671 Turks & Caicos  
Recovered

109 Bahamas  
1 Turks & Caicos  
Hospitalized

1 Turks & Caicos  
Positive Cases that Left Country

102 Bahamas  
6 Turks & Caicos  
COVID-related Deaths

19 Bahamas  
Non-COVID-related Deaths

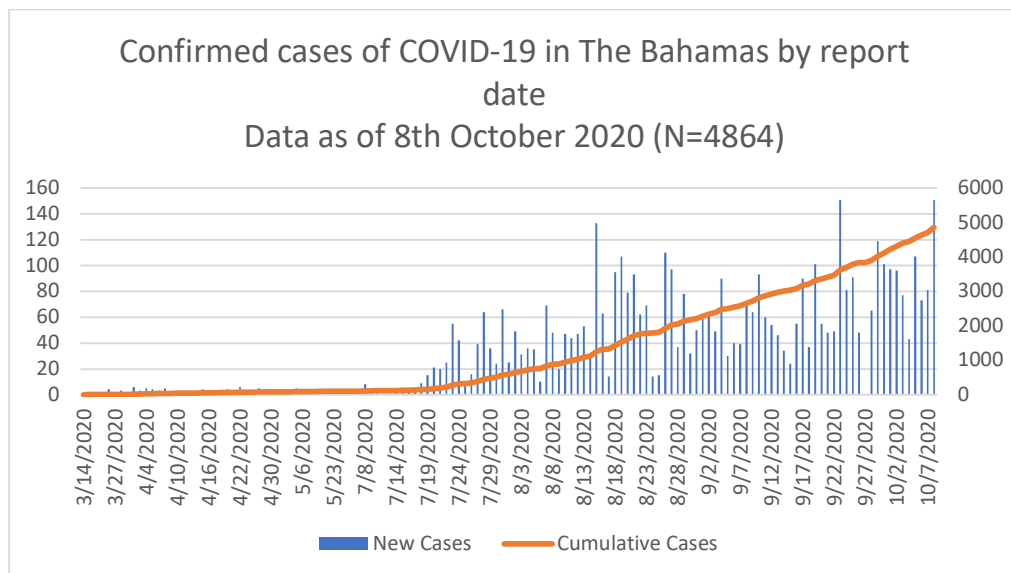
13 Bahamas  
Deaths under investigation

### PAHO RESPONSE

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

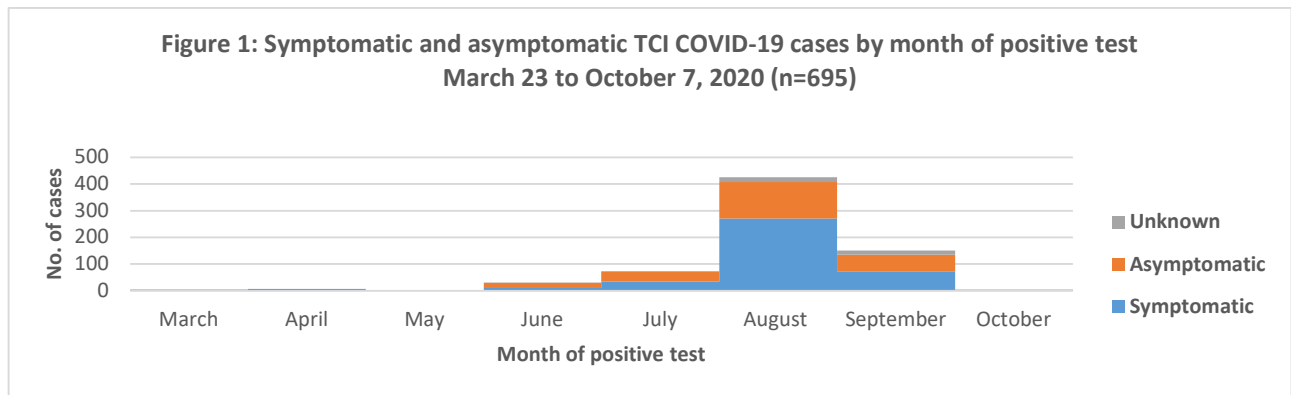
## The Bahamas

- Emergency Orders have been extended through to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020.
- Amendments were announced for the Orders which include the following:
  - 24-hour weekend curfew commencing Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at 7 pm to Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at 5 am for both Abaco and New Providence. Only essential services will be available during this time.
  - The weekday curfew for Abaco and New Providence will change to 7pm to 5am;
  - All social gatherings will be discontinued;
  - Funerals may occur at gravesite only and like weddings, is restricted to 10 persons excluding officiant. No repasts, wakes or receptions are permitted.
  - Beaches, parks and gyms on both Abaco and New Providence are closed.
  - All schools will operate virtually only.
  - Stores will only provide curbside services and restaurants only take-away, curbside or delivery services.
  - Breaches of COVID-19 protocols will incur double fines.
  - COVID-19 negative RT-PCR tests are required for check-in by international travelers and nationals at hotels on Abaco and New Providence.



## Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

- Emergency Orders have been extended through to 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020.
- The COVID-19 Enforcement Team continued its efforts with task force meetings, hotline and email accessibility, and inspections. 498 inspections were conducted on business premises throughout Grand Turk and Providenciales.
- Public Health Control Regulations were emphasized for bars and restaurants to maintain maximum occupancy of 30% and outdoor public gatherings only with a maximum of 25 persons considering the upcoming holiday.



## 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.
- 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 utilized 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.
- 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 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.
- Contact tracing for newly detected cases is ongoing.
- 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 Cuban health contingent of 20 persons continue to operate in medical facilities though 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.
- PAHO Representative participated in discussions with the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, Cabinet, Opposition members and the Chamber of Commerce to discuss the current COVID-19 situation, links between public health and the economy, and, to discuss options for strengthening the public health response in a spirit of unity and solidarity.

### 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/infections/quarantine of frontline health, security service and other sector workers.

### 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.