

Situation in The Bahamas & Turks and Caicos Islands 19th November 2020

On 30th January 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) a public health emergency of international concern. As of 19th November 2020, there were 56,162,865 cases and 1,347,894 deaths reported globally. The Region of the Americas accounted for 24,035,426 confirmed cases and 690,020 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 12th November 2020, there were 204 newly confirmed cases, 8 deaths from COVID-19 (6 were from deaths under investigation), and 2 non-COVID-19 related deaths.

Among the new cases:

- Forty percent were from Grand Bahama and thirteen percent were from New Providence;
- 106 (52%) are male and 98 (48%) are female.

Among total confirmed cases:

- Eighty percent of deaths (131) were from New Providence;
- 41,187 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

Since 12th November 2020, there were 10 newly confirmed cases.

Among total confirmed cases:

- 341 (47.1%) are female and 379 (52.6%) are male (data 18th November 2020);
- The age distribution of all cases (data to 18th November 2020) is 0-5 (3.7%), 6-19 (12.2%), 20-29 (19.3%), 30-39 (25.0%), 40-49 (22.1%), 50-59 (10.8%), 60-79 (6.1%), 80 and over (0.7%), unknown (0.1%);
- 100 persons are quarantined/home isolation;
- 6093 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

The Bahamas

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	5348	131
Grand Bahama	956	24
Abaco	190	3
Eleuthera	143	1
Exuma	100	1
Bimini/Cat Cay	76	2
Berry Islands	45	1
Inagua	19	0
Andros	19	0
Long Island	11	0
Cat Island	8	0
Acklins	7	0
Crooked Island	6	0
Mayaguana	3	0
Pending	346	0
TOTAL	7163	163

Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Providenciales	670	5
North Caicos	20	0
Parrot Cay	11	0
Grand Turk	25	1
South Caicos	1	0
TOTAL	726	6

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

TOTAL CASES

7367 Bahamas
716 Turks & Caicos
Confirmed

1567 Bahamas
21 Turks & Caicos
Active Cases

5583 Bahamas
695 Turks & Caicos
Recovered

22 Bahamas
1 Turks & Caicos
Hospitalized

1 Turks & Caicos
Positive Cases that Left Country

163 Bahamas
6 Turks & Caicos
COVID-related Deaths

32 Bahamas
Non-COVID-related Deaths

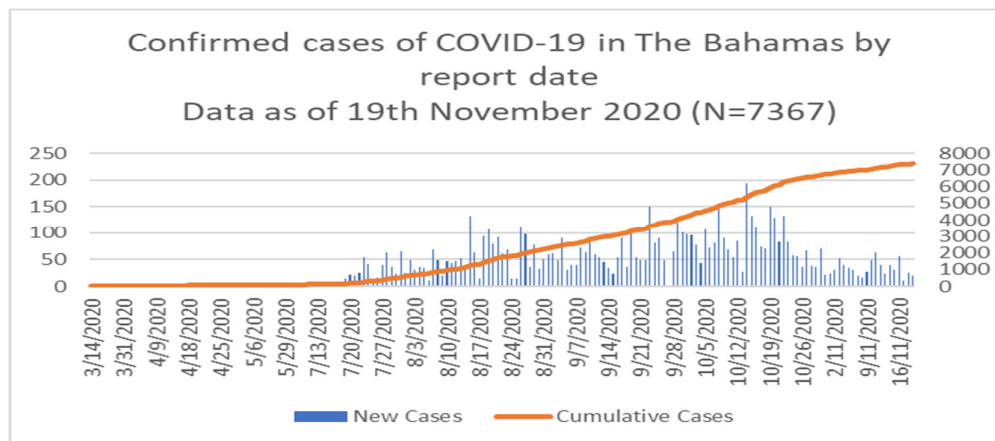
22 Bahamas
Deaths under investigation

PAHO RESPONSE

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

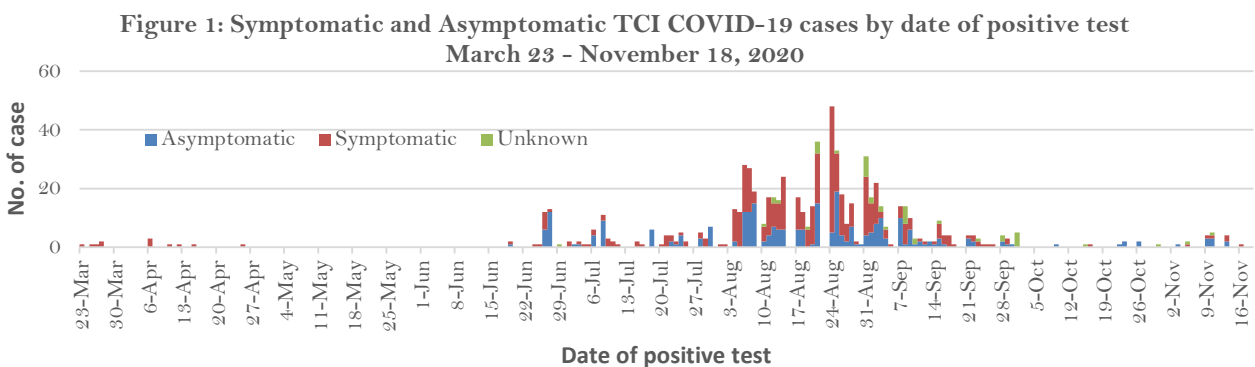
The Bahamas

- Emergency Orders have been extended through to 30th November 2020.
- Weekend nightly curfew continued for New Providence and Abaco and weekend lockdown continued for Mainland Eleuthera and Exuma.
- Nightly curfews continued on New Providence, Abaco, Grand Bahama, Mainland Eleuthera and Mainland Exuma.
- Funeral services are limited to the graveyard and are not be held in funeral chapels on New Providence and Abaco.
- The Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with Ministry of Health has established an online survey for health screening purposes for incoming tourists, citizens and residents, to be completed daily up to 14 days after their arrival. Fines will be imposed for those who not complete the daily survey.
- A domestic travel health visa will be implemented for persons travelling from Abaco, Grand Bahama, Mainland Eleuthera, Mainland Exuma and New Providence to other islands in The Bahamas.
- The National Food Distribution Task Force spends 1.3 million per week on food assistance.



Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

- COVID-19 Control Measures are extended until 30th November 2020.
- Funerals and weddings are limited to a maximum 40 persons.
- A nightly curfew is in effect on all islands from 12:00 pm to 5:00 am.



NATIONAL RESPONSE

The Bahamas Ministry of Health (MOH)

- While New Providence is the epi-center for COVID-19 in The Bahamas, there have been increases in newly confirmed cases on the islands of Grand Bahama, Mainland Eleuthera and Mainland Exuma. A team from MOH completed its assessment in Exuma on the COVID-19 situation this past week.
- Daily laboratory testing continues at the National Reference Laboratory (NRL), PMH, Rand Memorial Hospital and private sector laboratories.
- The Contact Tracing Command Centre is still operating and an on-line contact tracing course continues to be offered through the University of The Bahamas (UB).
- Preparatory work continues for developing the preparation of a National COVID-19 Vaccine Plan, with support from PAHO.
- A SharePoint platform is utilized for multiple user entry of contact tracing data, case investigation 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, Doctors Hospital West and Rand Memorial Hospital.
- 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 continues to implement 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.
- The National Public Health Laboratory continues to conduct COVID-19 PCR testing and 6,093 tests were completed to date. Testing has been expanded to include "frontline" workers and community-based testing.
- Preparatory work continues for developing the National COVID-19 Vaccine Plan.
- Community drive-thru testing for COVID-19 continued in Providenciales and at "walk-up" sites on other islands.
- Go.Data is being utilized for field data collection and contact tracing investigations.
- A Cuban health contingent of 20 persons continues to operate in medical facilities through a 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 was completed by 36 physicians and nurses from MOH, 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 adjusting workflow and workplace layout to minimize risks of COVID-19 infection.
- PAHO Country Office personnel continue to participate in MOH's planning committee for developing the country's COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy and plan.

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. A weekly virtual meeting is convened between MOH and PAHO for discussion of the technical cooperation programme.
- A PAHO led Infection Prevention Control Training course continues with 20 personnel enrolled in the course.

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, within-country 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

- A tented patient facility donated by Samaritan's Purse increased health care capacity in New Providence. However, there are still concerns about insufficient capacity for handling severe cases.
- COVID-19 testing has been expanded in both the public and private sectors to cope with increased demands for testing. Many sites have started using antigen tests, before MOH disseminated guidance on the subject. Reporting of antigen test results compounds on-going challenges with coordination and timely receipt of results from all laboratories.
- There has been a decline in infections and requirements for isolation/quarantine of frontline health, security service and other sector workers.

Turks and Caicos Islands

- The decline in confirmation of new cases has decreased the workload for contact tracers. The Ministry of Health has initiated community-based COVID-19 testing.
- Stigma and discrimination by public towards COVID-19 confirmed and suspected cases.