

## Situation in The Bahamas & Turks and Caicos Islands 23<sup>rd</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 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020, there were cases and deaths reported globally. The Region of the Americas accounted for confirmed cases and 599,169 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 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020, there were 751 newly confirmed cases, 16 deaths from COVID-19, and 3 non-COVID-19 related deaths.

Among the new cases:

- Seventy-eight percent were from New Providence;

Among total confirmed cases:

- Eighty-one percent of deaths ( ) were from New Providence;
- 33,701 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

#### Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

Since 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020, there were 3 newly confirmed cases.

Among total confirmed cases:

- 335 (48%) are female and 363 (52%) are male (data 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020);
- The age distribution of all cases (data to 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020) is 0-5 (3.9%), 6-19 (12.2%), 20-29 (19.2%), 30-39 (24.8%), 40-49 (22.1%), 50-59 (11.0%), 60-79 (6.0%), 80 and over (0.7%), unknown (0.1%);
- 29 persons are quarantined/home isolation;
- 4,099 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

#### The Bahamas

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	4831	105
Grand Bahama	696	17
Abaco	165	3
Berry Islands	41	1
Bimini	56	2
Cat Island	8	0
Eleuthera	46	1
Exuma	36	1
Inagua	19	0
Acklins	7	0
Long Island	11	0
Crooked Island	6	0
Andros	11	0
Mayaguana	3	0
Pending	332	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6268</b>	<b>130</b>

#### Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Providenciales	643	5
North Caicos	19	0
Parrot Cay	11	0
Grand Turk	25	1
South Caicos	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>6</b>

## SITUATION IN NUMBERS

### TOTAL CASES

6268 Bahamas  
699 Turks & Caicos  
Confirmed

2303 Bahamas  
4 Turks & Caicos  
Active Cases

3795 Bahamas  
688 Turks & Caicos  
Recovered

122 Bahamas  
0 Turks & Caicos  
Hospitalized

1 Turks & Caicos  
Positive Cases that Left Country

130 Bahamas  
6 Turks & Caicos  
COVID-related Deaths

26 Bahamas  
Non-COVID-related Deaths

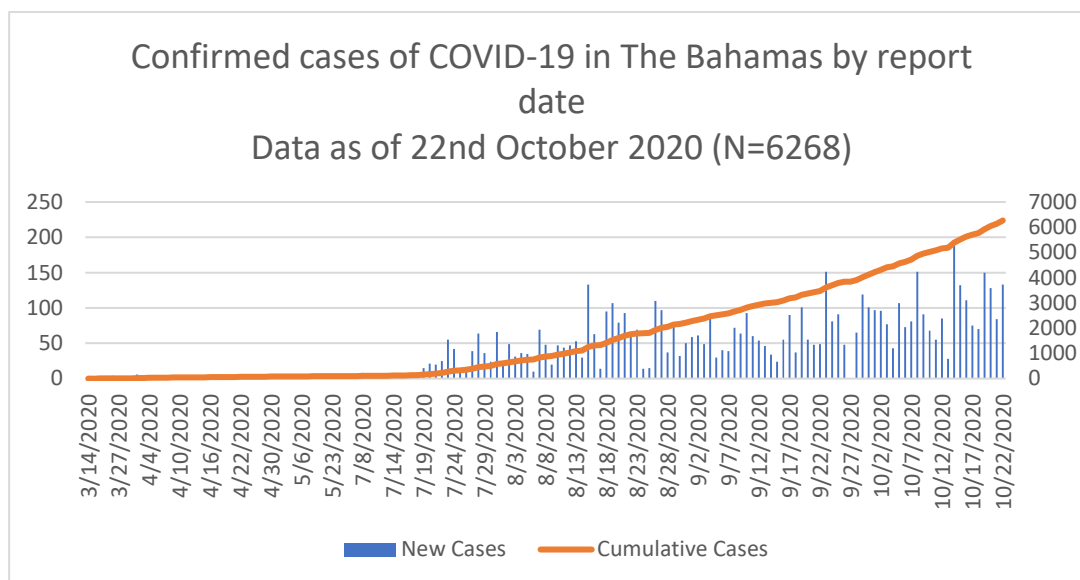
14 Bahamas  
Deaths under investigation

### 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

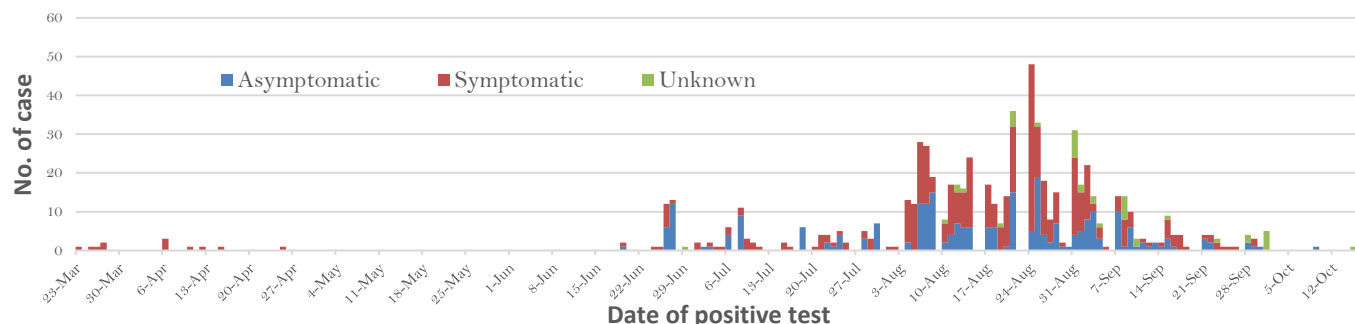
- Emergency Orders have been extended through to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020.
- Weekend lockdown will continue this weekend from 7 pm Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020 to 5 am Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020.
- A resolution was debated in the House of Parliament to extend the Emergency Orders until 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 due the increase in COVID-19 cases. This will be debated on Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020.



## Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

- Emergency Orders have been extended through to 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020.
- A Cabinet Meeting was held on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020 in which the revised National COVID-19 testing strategy was approved. The strategy calls for mandatory testing for frontline workers, all patients submitted to TCI hospitals, and community testing across all islands.

Figure 1: Symptomatic and Asymptomatic TCI COVID-19 cases by date of positive test  
March 23 - October 21, 2020



## NATIONAL RESPONSE

### The Bahamas Ministry of Health (MOH)

- New Providence continues being the epi-center for COVID-19 in The Bahamas. Heightened concern remains due to on-going reports of new confirmed cases and deaths, increased number of hospitalizations and limited bed capacity in New Providence.
- Workplace exposures to COVID-19 are increasing and often results in closure for cleaning and sanitization and the quarantine of all or some employees.

- The international Nongovernmental Organization, Samaritan's Purse, completed setup for a tented inpatient facility to accommodate step-down care to 28-30 COVID-19 positive patients at Princess Margaret Hospital. The facility commenced acceptance of patients on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020.
- Daily laboratory testing continues at the National Reference Laboratory (NRL), Princess Margaret Hospital, Rand Memorial Hospital and private sector laboratories.
- 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, 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 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.
- The National Public Health Laboratory continues to conduct COVID-19 PCR testing and 4,099 tests were completed to date. Testing has been expanded to include testing of frontline workers.
- Drive-thru testing for COVID-19 commenced on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020 in Providenciales at one site for any persons wishing to receive the test, with or without symptoms.
- 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 (IPC) Training course ended this past week. A total of 36 physicians and nurses participated in the course from the Ministry of Health, Public Hospitals Authority, and Department of Public Health. A subregional IPC training also started last week with the registration of 3 additional participants.
- 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.

## **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**

- The tented patient facility donated by Samaritan's Purse increases 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. 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**

- The decline in confirmed cases has relieved the workload burden for contact tracers. The Ministry of Health is considering expansion of community-based testing.
- Increase in the number of infected healthcare workers.
- Stigma and discrimination by public towards COVID-19 confirmed and suspected cases.