

## Situation in The Bahamas & Turks and Caicos Islands 30<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 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020, there were 44,503,717 cases and 1,174,154 deaths reported globally. The Region of the Americas accounted for 20,151,141 confirmed cases and 633,668 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 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020, there were 376 newly confirmed cases, 12 deaths from COVID-19, and 1 non-COVID-19 related death.

Among the new cases:

- Seventy-seven percent were from New Providence;
- 177 (47%) are males and 199 (53%) are females.

Among total confirmed cases:

- Eighty-one percent of deaths (117) were from New Providence;
- 33,701 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

#### Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

Since 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020, there were 5 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%);
- 56 persons are quarantined/home isolation;
- 4,348 real time PCR (RT-PCR) tests have been conducted to date.

#### The Bahamas

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	5122	117
Grand Bahama	744	17
Abaco	168	3
Eleuthera	64	1
Bimini & Cat Cay	59	2
Berry Islands	41	1
Exuma	36	1
Inagua	19	0
Andros	12	0
Long Island	11	0
Cat Island	8	0
Acklins	7	0
Crooked Island	6	0
Mayaguana	3	0
Pending	344	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6644</b>	<b>142</b>

#### Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Providenciales	648	5
North Caicos	19	0
Parrot Cay	11	0
Grand Turk	25	1
South Caicos	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>6</b>

## SITUATION IN NUMBERS

### TOTAL CASES

6644 Bahamas  
703 Turks & Caicos  
Confirmed

2111 Bahamas  
8 Turks & Caicos  
Active Cases

4345 Bahamas  
688 Turks & Caicos  
Recovered

87 Bahamas  
0 Turks & Caicos  
Hospitalized

1 Turks & Caicos  
Positive Cases that Left Country

142 Bahamas  
6 Turks & Caicos  
COVID-related Deaths

27 Bahamas  
Non-COVID-related Deaths

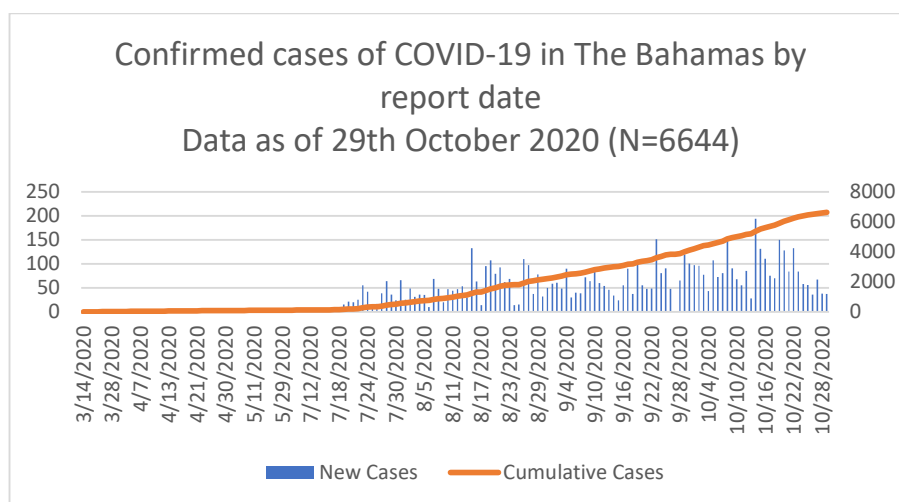
19 Bahamas  
Deaths under investigation

### 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 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020.
- Weekend lockdown will continue this weekend from 8 pm Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020 to 5 am Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020.
- Nightly curfews from Mondays to Thursdays will commence at 8:00 pm (changed from 7:00 pm) and end at 5:00 am effective 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020.
- Beaches and parks on New Providence and Abaco will reopen on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020, Mondays to Fridays only.
- The opening of the tourism sector will occur on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020.
- The quarantine requirement of 14 days for incoming travelers including visitors, citizen and residents of The Bahamas will be discontinued as of 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020. However, a documented RT-PCR negative test result obtained on a samples collected 5 days prior to travel is still required.
- Phase One of the Food Assistance Program ended on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020. Details of Phase Two have not yet been shared with the public.

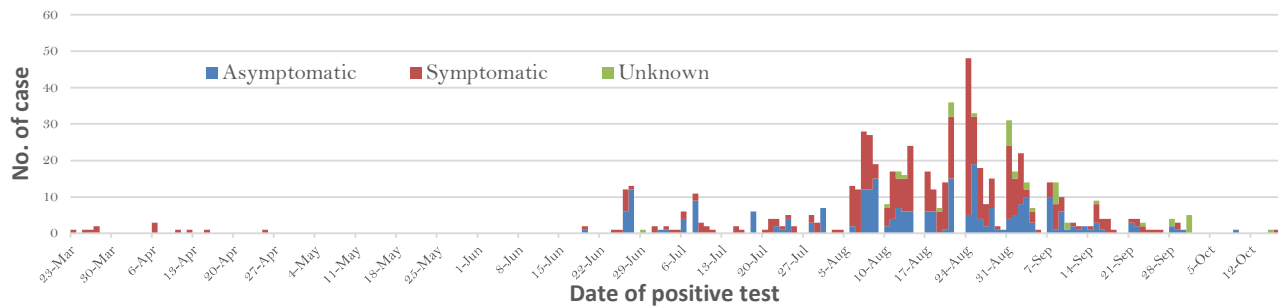


## Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

- Changes to the COVID-19 Control Measures commencing 5:00 am 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020 to 5:00 am 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020 include the following:
  - Nightly curfew on all islands from 12:00 am to 5:00 am;
  - Business closures by 11:00 pm;
  - Outdoor funeral services and burial grounds limited to 40 attendees, 1 officiant, and essential mortuary staff;
  - Indoor/outdoor wedding services limited to 40 attendees;
  - Logbooks are to be kept at all social gatherings;
  - No restrictions on domestic travel;
- Screening at Airports and the Port Authority to include temperature checks before boarding planes and boats will commence 5:00 am 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020 to 5:00 am 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.
- Effective 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020, all government offices will return to normal working hours and staff undergo mandatory COVID-19 testing
- The Coronavirus Ground Transport Sector Business Assistance Grant application commenced on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020. Public Service Transport License Holders who meet the criteria will receive a

cash grant up to \$1200.00.

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)

- Currently, New Providence is the epi-center for COVID-19 in The Bahamas. Since the establishment of a tented facility at Princess Margaret Hospital, the situation of availability of hospital beds has improved at Princess Margaret Hospital.
- Daily laboratory testing continues at the National Reference Laboratory (NRL), Princess Margaret Hospital, Rand Memorial Hospital and private sector laboratories. A laboratory sub-committee team of the EOC has been established to discuss quality management issues. Issues around introduction of antigen testing are being discussed.
- The Contact Tracing Command Centre is still operational and an on-line contact tracing course continues to be offered through the University of The Bahamas (UB).
- MOH personnel participated in a PAHO live Virtual Meeting to share with participants the Bahamas' experience with Contact Tracing.
- 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 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 4,348 tests were completed to date. Testing has been expanded to include "frontline" workers and community-based testing.
- Community drive-thru testing for COVID-19 continued in Providenciales and commenced at "walk-up" sites on the other islands. Two confirmed cases were identified this past week through Community-based Testing.
- GoData 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 donated nasopharyngeal swabs to Ministry of Health.
- PAHO Country Office personnel have been invited to participate in MOH's planning committee for developing the country's COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy and plan. The first meeting was held on 30<sup>th</sup> October 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**

- The 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. 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 has initiated community-based COVID-19 testing.
- Stigma and discrimination by public towards COVID-19 confirmed and suspected cases.