



The Bahamas & Turks and Caicos Islands

23 September 2021

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

The Bahamas

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on 15 March 2020. During the period 17-23 September 2021, there were 573 newly confirmed cases of COVID-19, and 18 COVID-19 related deaths.

Among the new cases:

- 476 (83%) were from New Providence;
- 257 (45%) were male and 316 (55%) were female;
- 16 cases (all from New Providence) were travel-related.

The total number of real time PCR tests conducted as of 23 September 2021 was 143,769 tests.

Turks and Caicos Islands

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on 23 March 2020. During the period 17-23 September 2021, there were 23 newly confirmed cases of COVID-19, and one COVID-19 related death.

Among new cases 23 (92%) were from Providenciales, and 2 (8%) were from Grand Turk.

Among the total confirmed cases:

- 1,353 (48%) were male, and 1467 (52%) were female as of 22 September 2021;

The total number of real time PCR tests and Rapid Antigen Tests conducted to 23 September 2021 was 32,850 and 241,750 tests respectively.

GLOBAL

230,073,640 Cases
4,719,159 Deaths

REGION OF THE AMERICAS

88,241,285 Cases
2,187,989 Deaths

THE BAHAMAS

20,603 Confirmed
1,673 Active
18,265 Recovered
155 Hospitalized
522 Deaths

TURKS & CAICOS

2,824 Confirmed
93 Active
2,701 Recovered
1 Hospitalized
22 Deaths

Total cases and deaths, as of 23 September 2021

The Bahamas

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	15683	375
Grand Bahama	2454	91
Abaco	628	13
Eleuthera	572	7
Exuma	344	6
Bimini/Cat Cay	237	9
Berry Islands	104	2
Inagua	26	0
Andros	260	4
Long Island	68	2
Cat Island	90	1
Acklins	9	0
San Salvador	16	0
Crooked Island	11	0
Mayaguana	5	1
Ragged Island	0	0
Pending	96	11
TOTAL	20,603	522

Turks and Caicos Islands

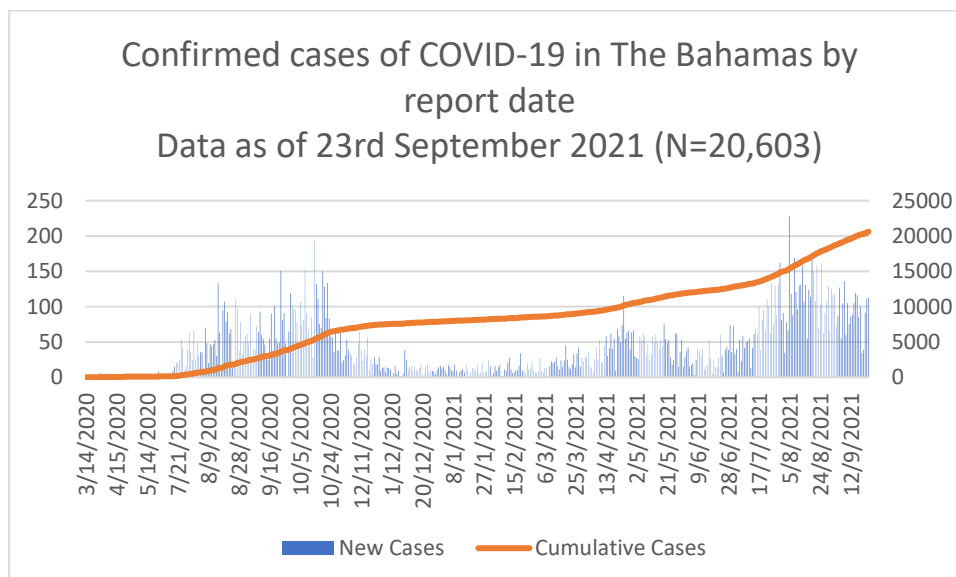
Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Providenciales	2309	17
North Caicos	98	0
Parrot Cay	13	0
Grand Turk	318	5
South Caicos	58	0
Middle Caicos	27	0
Ambergris Cay	1	0
TOTAL	2,824	22

SITUATION SUMMARY

HIGHLIGHTS

The Bahamas

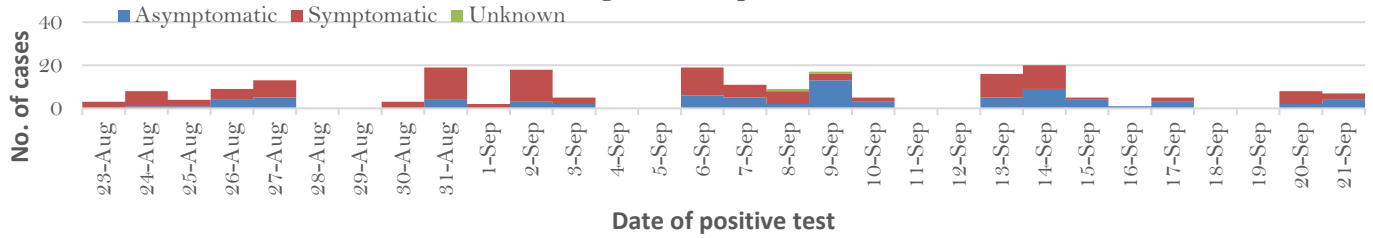
- The number of new cases remain high, though a downward trend in infections has been noted.
- A new government was elected on 16 September 2021 and a new Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. Michael Darville, has assumed office. Quarantined persons were permitted to vote.
- The new government intends to implement free COVID-19 testing, and has identified that increasing bed capacity and increasing human resources for public health are among its top priorities.
- The Emergency Powers Order has been amended to enact the following:
 - lifting of the requirement for travel health visas for inter-island travel. Health visas are still required for citizens, residents, and visitors entering the country, at no cost to citizens and residents;
 - permitting vaccinated inter-island travelers from New Providence and Grand Bahama to produce a negative rapid antigen test, and unvaccinated travelers to produce the negative RT-PCR test at the point of embarkation; and
 - lifting the requirements for secondary testing for inter-island travelers.
- Starting 17 September 2021, the curfew has been extended for Andros, Abaco, Bimini, Cat Island, Eleuthera, Grand Bahama, New Providence and, Great and Little Exuma and its surrounding cays from Mondays through Sundays between 11:59pm and 5:00am.



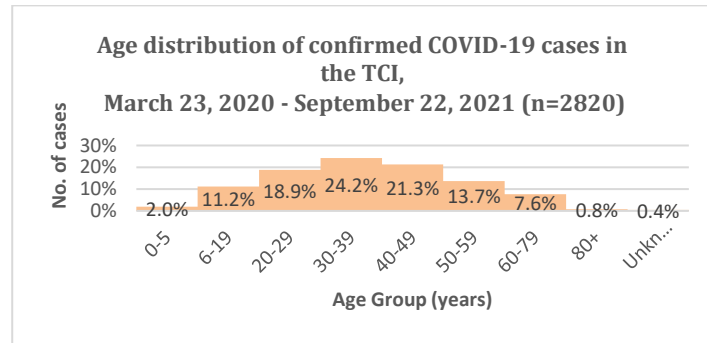
Turks and Caicos Islands

- There has been a decrease in the number of newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 compared to the previous week.
- Tourism activities have been well above average for the Turks and Caicos Islands and the increase in visitors has implications for population health.
- The pandemic public health regulations and protocols continue and will remain in effect until 30 September 2021 at 5:00 am.

**Symptomatic and Asymptomatic TCI COVID-19 cases by date of positive test
August 23 - September 21, 2021**



Source: Turks and Caicos Islands Situation Report 75



Source: Turks and Caicos Islands Situation Report 75

RESPONSE

PAHO/WHO continues to provide both The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands with access to updated technical guidelines, technical assistance and situational updates related to the COVID-19 response.

The Bahamas

- COVID-19 vaccine distribution continued throughout the family of islands according to the scheduled appointed times. AstraZeneca is only being given for second doses whilst Pfizer and Janssen and Janssen are being given for persons requiring first doses.
- As of 18 September 2021, 114,333 persons received their first dose, and 73,901 persons are fully vaccinated.
- The COVID-19 Mobile Unit is operational and individuals who are homebound, hearing impaired, mentally challenged, physically challenged, and visually impaired, as well as their caretakers may schedule an appointment to receive their COVID-19 vaccine via this means.
- Restrictions on traffic into and out of Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) continue, with only emergency cases being allowed for service. Hospitalizations continue to increase.
- The Public Hospitals Authority continues to request that all persons presenting to PMH for emergency care who have taken a COVID-19 test within 72 hours present the results to the Emergency Room to accelerate triage and treatment.
- The PMH Morgue continues to operate over its capacity.
- Moderate to severe COVID-19 cases continue to be treated at PMH, Doctors Hospital West and the Rand Memorial Hospital (RMH) and less severe cases at the South Beach Health Center.
- COVID-19 laboratory PCR testing continues at the National Reference Laboratory (NRL), PMH, RMH and private sector laboratories.
- A National Respiratory Surveillance Genomics Database is in use by the NRL for genetic analysis. Several genomic deletions and variant mutations have been identified by the NRL.
- The Alpha, Delta, and Gamma, variants of concern, and the Iota, variant of interest, were detected among samples previously sent to the Fiocruz Laboratory in Brazil for genomic sequencing.
- Results are pending for ten COVID-19 samples sent in March 2021 to the Caribbean Public Health Agency.
- A SharePoint platform continues to be utilized for multiple user entry of contact tracing data, case investigation and laboratory test results.

- The Public Hospital's Authority continues to distribute personal protective equipment across all public hospitals and clinics.
- Ministry of Health continues to provide telemedicine, telepsychology, mental health, and psychosocial support services.
- Ministry of Health, in collaboration with PAHO/WHO and other partners, continues to implement a communication campaign to increase immunization coverage for influenza and other vaccines.

Turks and Caicos Islands

- COVID-19 vaccine distribution continued throughout the islands including for children ages 12-15 years of age.
- 5,850 doses of Pfizer BioNTech vaccine was received from the United Kingdom Government.
- Persons continue to register for the COVID-19 vaccine via the online portal which is available in three languages: English, French-Creole, and Spanish.
- Go.Data continues to be utilized for field data collection and contact tracing investigations.
- Community drive-through services continue to provide access to COVID-19 tests throughout the islands.
- Face-to-face learning in some schools in Turks and Caicos Islands have indefinitely discontinued due to exposures by school personnel.
- The National Public Health Laboratory continues to conduct COVID-19 PCR testing.
- The communication education campaign continues with communication materials on the COVID-19 vaccine shared via traditional means and social media.

GAPS/CHALLENGES

- Vaccine deployment plans in The Bahamas continue to be adapted to accelerate vaccination as more vaccines are currently in-country.
- Public compliance with public health protocols and vaccination hesitancy continue to present challenges in both The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands. Vaccine hesitancy is of particular concern among health care workers.
- There continues to be a risk of introduction of additional new variants to both The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands due the emergence and spread of COVID-19 variants in several countries from which tourists originate.
- While The Bahamas has capacity to identify the presence of COVID-19 variants, neither The Bahamas nor Turks and Caicos Islands have in-country sequencing capacity. This presents a challenge for the timely identification of new variants.
- Both countries are challenged by the limited global supply of Cepheid Test Kits and other supplies required for COVID-19 testing. Turks and Caicos Islands is particularly challenged as it is only possible for them to source Cepheid Test Kits through the United Kingdom Government.
- The Bahamas risks using current stocks of syringes for their National Immunization Programme for COVID-19 vaccine distribution due to limited global supply.
- In the Bahamas, 5-10% of health care workers in the public sector are in quarantine.