



The Bahamas & Turks and Caicos Islands

24 December 2021

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

The Bahamas

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on 15 March 2020. During the period 18-24 December 2021, there were 559 newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 0 COVID-19 related deaths.

Among the new cases:

- 512 (92%) were from New Providence;
- 244 (44%) were males and 315 (56%) were females;
- 158 cases (155 from New Providence, 2 from Exuma, and 1 Grand Bahama) were travel-related.

The total number of real time PCR tests conducted to 24 December 2021 was 180,362 tests.

Turks and Caicos Islands

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on 23 March 2020. During the period 18-24 December 2021, there were 72 newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 1 COVID-19 related death.

Among new cases, 65 (90%) cases were from Providenciales.

Among the total confirmed cases:

- 1547 (48.2%) were males and 1660 (51.8%) were females as of 22 December 2021;

The total number of Real time PCR tests and Rapid Antigen Tests conducted to 24 December 2021 was 45,870 and 328,194 tests respectively.

Total cases and deaths, as of 24 December 2021

The Bahamas

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	18112	517
Grand Bahama	2640	101
Abaco	660	19
Eleuthera	713	17
Exuma	369	9
Bimini/Cat Cay	246	12
Berry Islands	112	4
Inagua	61	3
Andros	293	9
Long Island	114	4
Cat Island	99	3
Acklins	28	0
San Salvador	16	0
Crooked Island	33	0
Mayaguana	21	2
Ragged Island	0	0
Pending	113	13
TOTAL	23630	713

Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Providenciales	2686	21
North Caicos	101	0
Parrot Cay	15	0
Grand Turk	345	5
South Caicos	60	0
Middle Caicos	27	0
Ambergris Cay	1	0
TOTAL	3235	26

GLOBAL (22 Dec.)
275,802,578 Cases
5,369,361 Deaths

REGION OF THE AMERICAS (22 Dec.)
100,567,882 Cases
2,393,039 Deaths

THE BAHAMAS
23,630 Confirmed
969 Active
21,760 Recovered
18 Hospitalized
713 Deaths

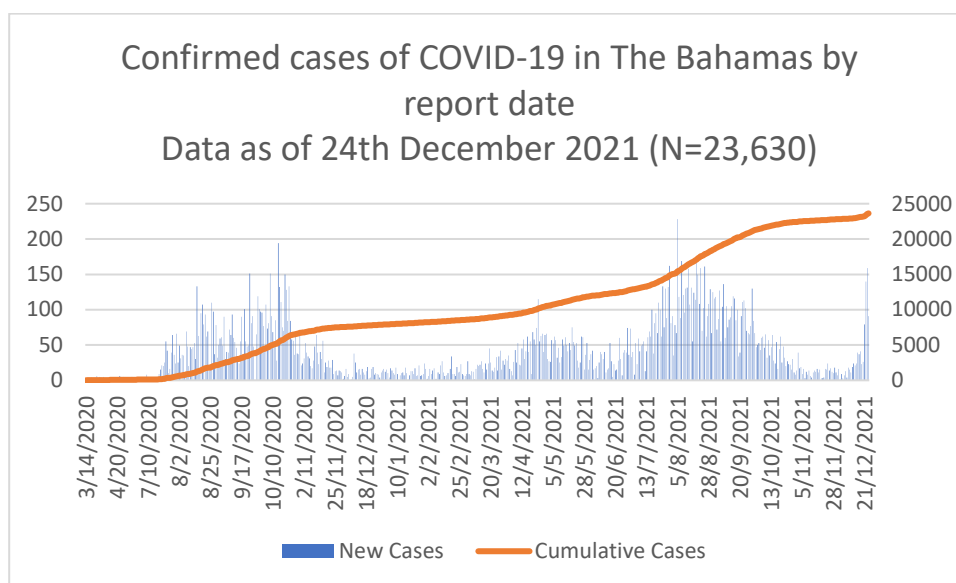
TURKS & CAICOS
3235 Confirmed
92 Active
3107 Recovered
26 Deaths

SITUATION SUMMARY

HIGHLIGHTS

The Bahamas

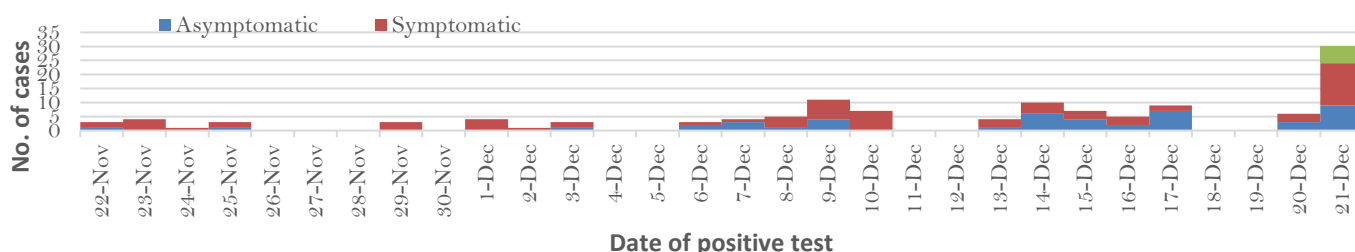
- There is an increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases.
- The Health Services (COVID-19) (Prevention and Management of Community Spread) Rules, 2021 and the Health Services (COVID-19) (General) Rules, 2021 remain in effect.
- As of 23 December 2021, the following changes came into effect:
 - Incoming travellers to The Bahamas were required to present negative COVID-19 tests obtained no longer than three days prior to arrival in country;
 - Indoor gatherings are limited to 20 persons while outdoor gatherings are limited to 30 persons.
- Effective 7 January 2022, all incoming travellers will be required to present a negative RT PCR test obtained no longer than three days prior to arrival in country



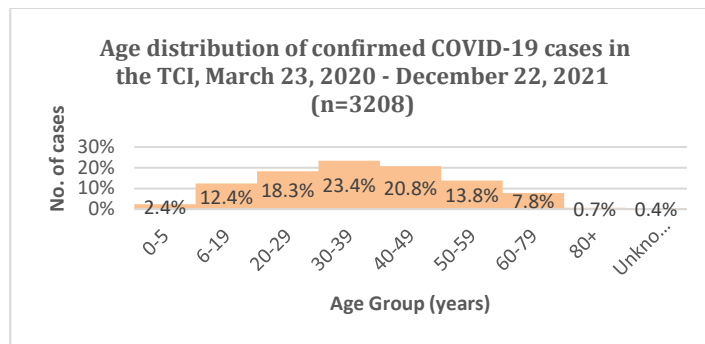
Turks and Caicos Islands

- There is a slight increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases.
- The Public and Environmental Health (COVID-19 Pandemic) Regulations 2021 are in effect until 28 February 2022.

Symptomatic and Asymptomatic TCI COVID-19 cases by date of positive test November 22 - December 21, 2021



Source: Turks and Caicos Islands Situation Report 88



Source: Turks and Caicos Islands Situation Report 88

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 including extended dose vaccinations continued throughout The Bahamas.
- As of 23 December 2021, 146,404 persons received their first dose of either the Astra Zeneca or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, and 154,153 persons were fully vaccinated including those who received the one dose Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine
- As of 20 December 2021, the Astra Zeneca COVID-19 Vaccine was available at all vaccination distribution centers for first, second, extended dose and booster shots.
- On 20 December 2021, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention changed the travel risk advisory for The Bahamas from Level 3, high, to Level 2, moderate.
- The COVID-19 Mobile Unit continues to operate and provide vaccinations to individuals who are homebound, hearing impaired, mentally challenged, physically challenged, and visually impaired as well as their caretakers.
- Restrictions continue on the amount of traffic into and out of PMH with only emergency cases being allowed for service.
- 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 to present the same to the Emergency Room to accelerate triage and treatment.
- 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.
- Go.Data continues to be utilized for data collection of confirmed COVID-19 cases and contact tracing.
- Health visas are no longer needed for Bahamian citizens and permanent residences returning to The Bahamas. However, the testing requirements to enter the country for Bahamian citizens and permanent residents remain in place.
- Non-Bahamian citizens and non-residents must present a travel health visa and a negative real time PCR or rapid antigen test taken no more than three days prior to travel and proof of vaccination for fully vaccinated travellers and a must show proof vaccination or a negative real time PCR test taken no more than three days prior to travel for not fully vaccinated persons.
- All travellers from Acklins, Berry Islands, Crooked Island, Eleuthera, Inagua, and New Providence, must provide a negative real time PCR or rapid antigen test if fully vaccinated or a negative real time

PCR test if not fully vaccinated at the departure point.

- An on-line contact tracing course continues to be offered through the University of The Bahamas.
- 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.
- Work continues in adapting and implementing the National COVID-19 Vaccine Plan to the changing situation with respect to access to vaccines, with support from PAHO/WHO.

Turks and Caicos Islands

- COVID-19 vaccine distribution continued throughout the islands including for children ages 12-15 years of age.
- More than 80% of the population is fully vaccinated with more than 3,000 booster COVID-19 shots given since inception.
- Persons aged over 50 years and the most vulnerable population continue to receive booster vaccines.
- The Alpha, Gamma and Delta B.1.617.2 Variants of Concern was confirmed to be in-country.
- 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.
- 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. COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy public service announcements were released this past week.
- A Cuban health contingent of 20 persons continues to operate in medical facilities through a bilateral agreement between the two countries.
- PAHO/WHO continues to assist with coordination for genomic sequencing of samples to the FioCruz Laboratory in Brazil.

GAPS/CHALLENGES

- 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.
- 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.
- A nursing shortage has been identified in The Bahamas and there are concerns about the delivery of healthcare services.
- In The Bahamas, 5-10% of health care workers in the public sector are in quarantine.
- Both countries risk importation of new variants including the Omicron variant due to incoming travellers from countries already known to have other variants.
- Shortages of swabs for COVID-19 testing may affect in-country testing capacity in The Bahamas.