



The Bahamas & Turks and Caicos Islands

18 February 2022

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

The Bahamas

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on 15 March 2020. During the period 12-18 February 2022, there were 116 newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 13 COVID-19 related deaths.

Among the new cases:

- 88 (76%) were from New Providence;
- 51 (44%) were males and 65 (56%) females;
- 40 cases (34 New Providence, 2 Exuma, 1 Abaco, 1 Berry Islands 1 Eleuthera, 1 Grand Bahama) were travel-related.

The total number of real time PCR tests conducted to 18 February 2022 was 217,077 tests.

Turks and Caicos Islands

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on 23 March 2020. During the period 12-18 February 2022, there were 20 newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 1 COVID-19 related death.

Among new cases, 15 (75%) cases were from Providenciales.

Among the total confirmed cases:

- 2799 (48.0%) were males, 3019 (51.7%) were females, and 18 (0.3%) unknown as of 16 February 2022;

The total number of Real time PCR tests and Rapid Antigen Tests conducted to 18 February 2022 was 55,759 and 392,549 tests respectively.

Total cases and deaths, as of 18 February 2022
The Bahamas Turks and Caicos Islands

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	26000	547
Grand Bahama	3363	121
Abaco	791	23
Eleuthera	832	18
Exuma	545	10
Bimini/Cat Cay	271	13
Berry Islands	152	4
Inagua	85	3
Andros	374	9
Long Island	142	4
Cat Island	133	3
Acklins	41	0
San Salvador	18	0
Crooked Island	34	0
Mayaguana	21	2
Ragged Island	0	0
Pending	239	13
TOTAL	33041	770

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Providenciales	4764	24
North Caicos	130	0
Parrot Cay	20	0
Grand Turk	772	9
South Caicos	116	1
Middle Caicos	35	0
Ambergris Cay	3	0
Pine Cay	1	0
Salt Cay	2	0
Unknown	0	3
TOTAL	5843	36

GLOBAL (17 Feb.)
416,613,387 Cases
5,844,735 Deaths

REGION OF THE AMERICAS (17 Feb.)
144,209,488 Cases
2,586,001 Deaths

THE BAHAMAS
33,041 Confirmed
6,101 Active
25,958 Recovered
45 Hospitalized
770 Deaths

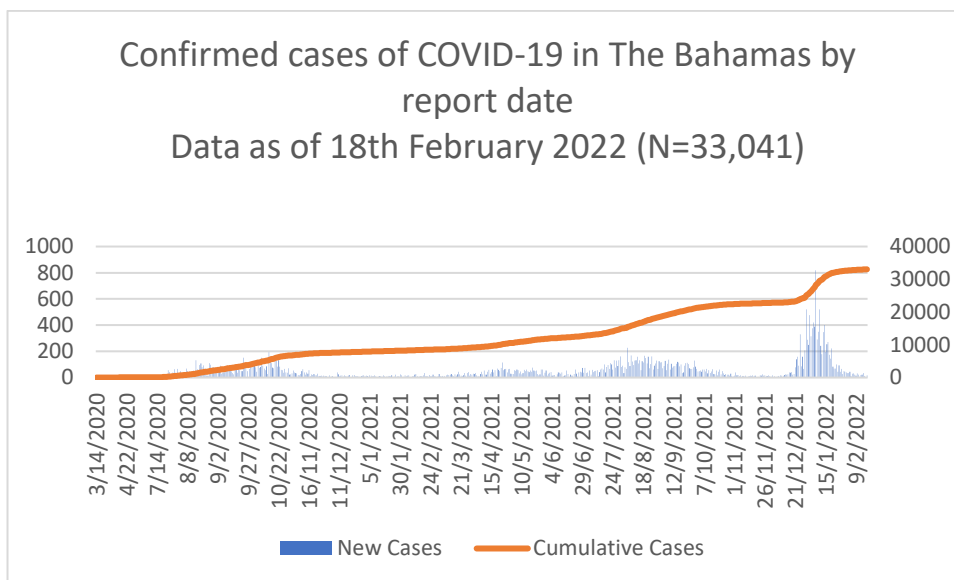
TURKS & CAICOS
5,843 Confirmed
31 Active
5,762 Recovered
36 Deaths

SITUATION SUMMARY

HIGHLIGHTS

The Bahamas

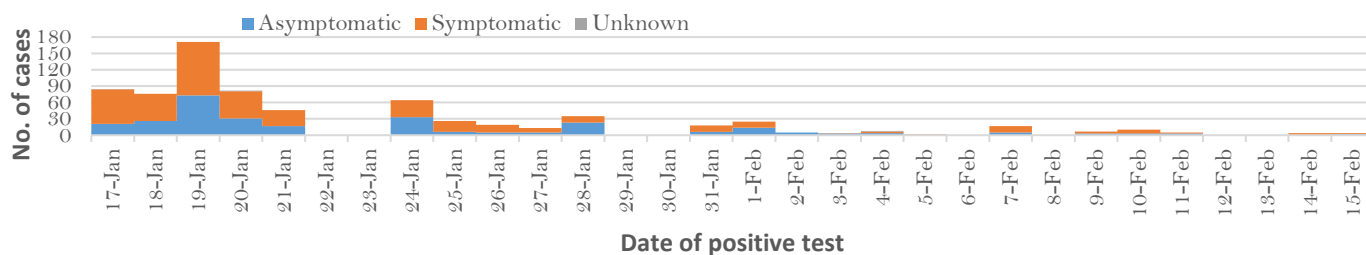
- There is a decrease in the incidence of new COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in country.
- The Health Services (COVID-19) (Prevention and Management of Community Spread) Rules, 2021 and the Health Services (COVID-19) (General) Rules, 2021 remain in effect.



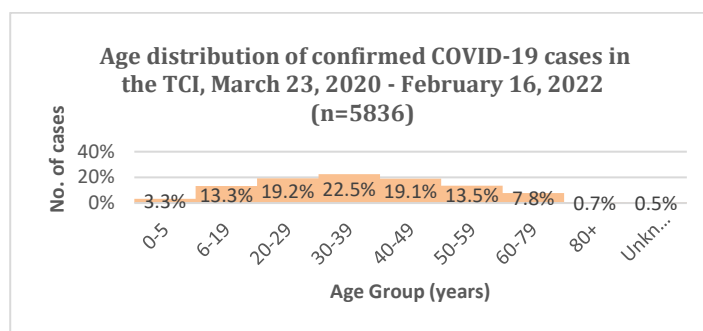
Turks and Caicos Islands

- There is a decrease in the incidence of new COVID-19 cases in country.
- 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 January 17 to February 15, 2022



Source: Turks and Caicos Islands Situation Report 96



Source: Turks and Caicos Islands Situation Report 96

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 and booster dose vaccinations continued throughout The Bahamas.
- PAHO/WHO continues to support the Ministry of Health and Wellness with implementing a social mobilization project in an effort to increase vaccination coverage. On 12 February 2022, the Minister of Health and Wellness and the PAHO/WHO Representative visited on of the vaccination pop-up sites at the Mother Butler Park on Meadow Street.
- On 16 February 2022, the United States Embassy donated 32,400 doses of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines to the Ministry of Health and Wellness.
- PAHO/WHO supported the Ministry of Health and Wellness in conducting a survey to determine the reasons why persons who are now receiving their first vaccine delayed doing so and also the reason for getting the vaccine now.
- 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 the Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) and the Rand Memorial Hospital (RMH) in Grand Bahama with only emergency cases being allowed for service.
- Moderate to severe COVID-19 cases continue to be treated at PMH, Doctors Hospital West and the 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.
- An on-line contact tracing course continues to be offered through the University of The Bahamas.
- 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 for entry into the country.
- Vaccinated travellers aged 12 and over are required to present a negative RT-PCR or Rapid Antigen test obtained no longer than three days prior to check-in for travel. Unvaccinated travellers aged 12 and over are required to present a negative RT-PCR test obtained no longer than three days prior to check-in for travel.
- Incoming visitors remaining in the country after 48 hours will be required to take a COVID-19 test regardless of vaccination status.
- The Public Hospital's Authority continues to distribute personal protective equipment across all public hospitals and clinics.
- A Cuban health contingent of 42 Cuban specialized Nurses continues to support clinical care through a bilateral agreement between the two countries.
- Ministry of Health and Wellness continues to provide telemedicine, telepsychology, mental health, and psychosocial support services.
- Ministry of Health and Wellness, 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.
- PAHO/WHO continues to assist The Bahamas in obtaining swabs for COVID-19 testing.



*Figure 1. Dr. Michael Darville, Minister of Health and Wellness and Dr. Eldonna Boisson, PAHO/WHO Representative for The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands at the Vaccination Pop-up Site at Mother Butler Park.
(Photo Credit: The Ministry of Health and Wellness Bahamas)*



*Figure 2. Vaccination Pop-up Site at the Mother Butler Park.
(Photo Credit: The Ministry of Health and Wellness Bahamas)*

Turks and Caicos Islands

- COVID-19 vaccine distribution continued throughout the islands, including for children ages 12-15 years of age.
- More than 83% of the population is fully vaccinated with 88% of persons receiving at least their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccination.
- Persons aged over 50 years and the most vulnerable population continue to receive booster vaccines.
- All persons over the age of 18 years and high-risk persons over 16 years of age may receive a third dose or booster shot of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- The Alpha, Gamma, Delta B.1.617.2 and Omicron 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.
- A Cuban health contingent of 20 persons was given an extension of an additional six months to support operations in the TCI Hospitals 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 and resistance continue to present challenges in both The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands. Vaccine hesitancy/resistance is of particular concern among health care workers and other emergency and frontline 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.
- A nursing shortage has been identified in The Bahamas and 50 Cuban nurses were recently hired to address this issue as well as staff burnout.
- In The Bahamas, 5-10% of health care workers in the public sector are in quarantine.
- Both countries risk importation of new variants as they immerse. While confirmation of the variant was made in the Turks and Caicos Islands, the epidemiological situation in The Bahamas is suggestive of the circulation of the Omicron variant.