



The Bahamas & Turks and Caicos Islands

18 March 2022

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

The Bahamas

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on 15 March 2020. During the period 12-18 March 2022, there were 25 newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 16 COVID-19 related deaths.

Among the new cases:

- 23 (92%) were from New Providence;
- 14 (56%) males and 11 (44%) females;
- 1 case (1 from New Providence) was travel-related.

The total number of real time PCR tests conducted to 18 March 2022 was 225,153 tests.

Turks and Caicos Islands

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on 23 March 2020. During the period 10-16 March 2022, there were 5 newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 0 COVID-19 related deaths.

Among new cases, 4 (80%) cases were from Providenciales as of 16 March 2022.

Among the total confirmed cases:

- 2819 (47.9%) were males, 3046 (51.8%) were females, and 19 (0.3%) were unknown gender as of 16 March 2022;

THE BAHAMAS (as of 18 Mar. 2022)

33,219 Confirmed
65 Active
32,147 Recovered
7 Hospitalized
787 Deaths

TURKS & CAICOS (as of 16 Mar. 2022)

5,884 Confirmed
8 Active
5,825 Recovered
0 Hospitalized
36 Deaths

Total cases and deaths

The Bahamas (as 18 March 2022)

Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
New Providence	26141	559
Grand Bahama	3380	124
Abaco	795	24
Eleuthera	833	18
Exuma	553	10
Bimini/Cat Cay	271	13
Berry Islands	153	4
Inagua	85	3
Andros	375	9
Long Island	144	4
Cat Island	134	3
Acklins	41	0
San Salvador	18	0
Crooked Island	35	0
Mayaguana	21	2
Ragged Island	0	0
Pending	240	14
TOTAL	33219	787

Turks and Caicos Islands (as of 16 March 2022)

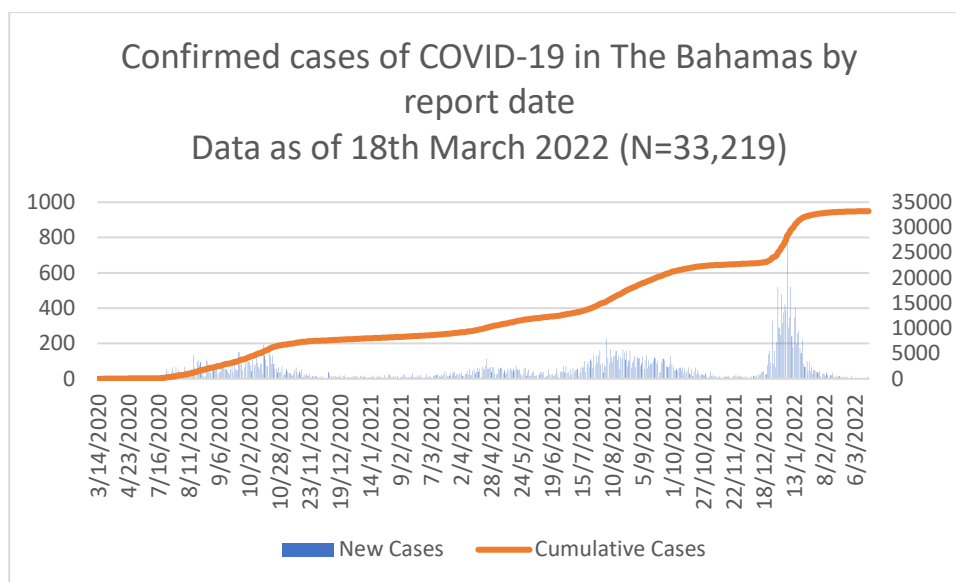
Island	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Providenciales	4819	24
North Caicos	129	0
Parrot Cay	20	0
Grand Turk	770	9
South Caicos	104	1
Middle Caicos	36	0
Ambergris Cay	3	0
Pine Cay	1	0
Salt Cay	2	0
Unknown	0	3
TOTAL	5884	36

SITUATION SUMMARY

HIGHLIGHTS

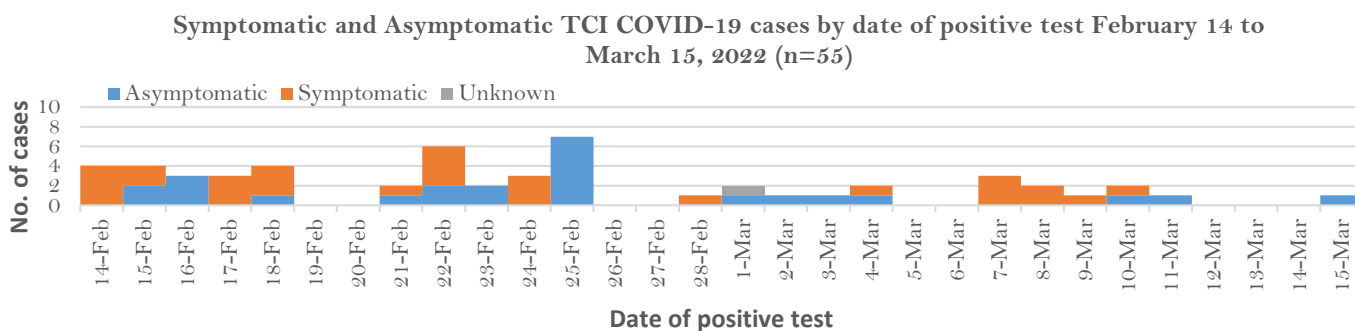
The Bahamas

- The incidence of new COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in country remains low, with the cumulative cases at a plateau.
- 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.
- The following changes were announced 12 March 2022:
 - Indoor social gathering at a private residence or facility increased to seventy-five per cent occupancy;
 - Outdoor social gathering increased to three hundred attendees;
 - Face masks are optional inside a hotel or outdoor setting where persons of different households are gathered and at least three feet separates them from each other;
 - Face makes are optional for disabled persons or persons with certain medical conditions with supporting medical certification to substantiate their condition.

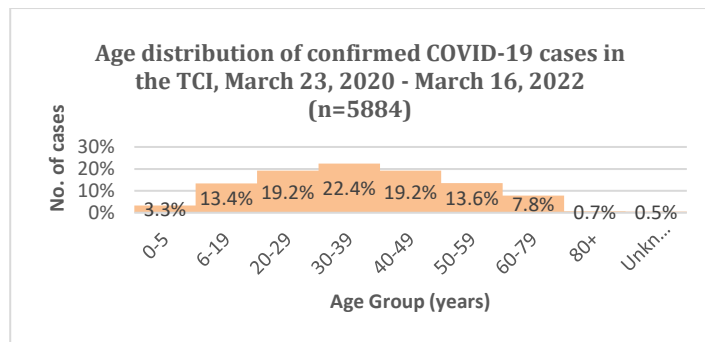


Turks and Caicos Islands

- The incidence of new COVID-19 cases in country remains low, with the cumulative cases at a plateau.
- For the fourth consecutive week, there has been no reported deaths.



Source: Turks and Caicos Islands Situation Report 100



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.
- 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.
- As of 14 March 2022, PMH visitors to the General Wards include persons 60 and older with only the legal next of kin and one other visitor only between 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm for a maximum fifteen minutes.
- Moderate to severe COVID-19 cases continue to be treated at PMH, Doctors Hospital West and the RMH.
- 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.
- 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, Gamma and Omicron variants of concern, and the Iota, variant of interest, have been confirmed in country.
- 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.
- Incoming travellers and persons travelling from Grand Bahama or New Providence must present a negative COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours. For fully vaccinated persons, this may be a RT-PCR test or Rapid Antigen COVID-19 test and for non-vaccinated persons this must be a RT-PCR test.
- For visitors out to sea on the second day of their stay in-country, they must take a Rapid Antigen COVID-19 test at the first Port of Call and submit results to the travel health visa website.
- The Public Hospitals Authority continues to distribute personal protective equipment across all public hospitals and clinics.
- A team from the Public Hospitals Authority travelled to Cuba 7 to 11 March 2022 to recruit Allied Health Professionals and Physicians to support clinical care at PMH and RMH. Fourteen persons including four Biomedical Engineers, one Nephrologist, two Ophthalmologists, six Pharmacists, and one Radiologist were contracted and are expected to be in-country at end of April 2022.
- 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.
- Ministry of Health and Wellness, the Office of the Prime Minister and PAHO/WHO are collaborating on the implementation of a revised communication strategy for increasing COVID-19 vaccination coverage, informed by the results of a recent social mobilization project and vaccination survey.

Turks and Caicos Islands

- COVID-19 vaccine distribution continued throughout the islands, including for children ages 12-15 years of age.
- On 15 March 2022, COVID-19 vaccination commenced for children 5-11 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 16 years and over are eligible and continue to receive booster vaccines.
- The Alpha, Gamma, Delta B.1.617.2 and Omicron Variants of Concern have been confirmed 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 continues to support operations in the TCI Hospitals through a bilateral agreement between the two countries.

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 vulnerable populations, 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.
- While a nursing shortage continues in The Bahamas, 42 Cuban nurses were hired to address this issue as well as staff burnout.