Summary

This is an update to the CARPHA Situation Report published on May 22, 2020, in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To date, there are 23,792 cases in 33 countries/territories (including 24 CARPHA Member States), in the Caribbean Region. The risk of further importation of cases to the rest of the Caribbean remains Very High. The overarching goal is for all countries to control the pandemic by slowing down the transmission and reducing mortality associated with COVID-19.

The Regional Coordinating Mechanism for Health Security (RCM-HS) is actively working with CARICOM Heads of Government and key partners on region-wide approaches to the COVID-19 response. Most Member States have begun a phased lifting of restrictions in country and some have initiated repatriation of nationals under advised protocols. Active surveillance and continued implementation of population social distancing measures are critical at this time.

New in this Report

- Surveillance and Epidemiology COVID-19 in 24 Member States
- CARPHA’s COVID-19 Response Timeline
- Tobacco Use and COVID-19

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

Globally
5,370,492 cases (376,934 new)**
344,454 deaths

Caribbean Region
33 countries, areas, or territories
23,792 cases (2,294 new)**
11,405 recovered (1,117 new)
819 deaths (23 new)

Rest of the World
182 countries, areas, or territories and Other***
5,346,700 cases (374,640 new)
2,242,246 recovered (286,399 new)
343,635 deaths (16,693 new)

*Clinically diagnosed and laboratory confirmed cases
** Figures reported by WHO which have been supplemented with additional data from local country reports
***Persons on board the Diamond Princess Cruise Ship harbouredd in Yokohama, Japan

SITUATION UPDATE

COVID-19 in the Caribbean

Since the previous report on May 22, 2020, an additional 2,294 cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in 16 countries within the Caribbean, bringing the region’s total confirmed cases to 23,792 in 33 countries/territories. This new total represents an 11% increase in the number of confirmed cases. There were 819 deaths recorded in the Caribbean region as at May 26, 2020.
As of May 26, 2020, the WHO reported 5,370,375 cases of patients with COVID-19. A total of 216 countries, areas or territories have confirmed at least one case among travellers exposed while abroad and/or person-to-person contact.

No new countries reported their first confirmed case of COVID-19 since the last Situation Report on May 22, 2020. Figure 1 shows a breakdown of cases by Region.

As of May 26, 2020, there have been 2,712 cases confirmed from CARPHA Member States (CMS), the highest number was reported on May 18, 2020. (Figure 2).

Data in Figure 2 was extracted from official reports published by Ministries of Health in Member States, and numbers may vary based on the time the information was extracted.

Figure 3 shows the 7-day moving average among CMS. The value for each day represents the average number of cases for 7 days calculated using number of confirmed cases for the current day and the six days prior to the current day.

The highest 7-day average was observed on May 23, 2020.
Among cases for whom sex was reported, 56% were female and 44% were male. (Figure 4).

For the cases for which data were available, the majority were between 20 and 59 years old, with 50-59 being the modal age group. There was no age reported for the majority of cases (2,422) which are excluded from Figure 5.

Among the 24 Member States, 54% (13/24) have been classified as having sporadic transmission of COVID-19 among cases, 38% (9/24) have reported clusters and 4% (1/24) currently has no cases.

The first CMS with community transmission has now been recorded. Figure 6 is based on data received by the WHO from national authorities by 10:00 CEST, May 25, 2020.

Laboratory

Since February 10, 2020 and as of May 25, 2020, CARPHA has received 4,389 samples from 16 CMS, 439 (10.0%) of which have tested positive since the start of the outbreak, 250 results (5.7%) correspond to unique new cases.

Figure 7 shows the progression of COVID-19 cases which have been confirmed in CMS from February – May 2020.

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Since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, and eventual pandemic, CARPHA has been keeping track of the disease and monitoring the risk of infection in the Caribbean Region and its Member States. The risk to Caribbean was declared to be very high on May 5th, 2020 and, despite some success stories within the region, remains at this level to date. See below for a full breakdown of the timeline of CARPHA’s responses to COVID-19 from March 5th to May 22nd, 2020.

**Laboratory Update**

**CARPHA Interim Guidance on the Evaluation and Selection of Diagnostic Tests for COVID-19**

CARPHA has designed a simple, user-friendly instrument consisting of 14 parameters to assist national and other stakeholders in the evaluation and selection of diagnostic tests, inclusive of rapid test kits, to be used for the COVID-19 response in CMS. More details can be found in the CARPHA Laboratory Update #12 issued May 15, 2020. Click here to access the complete document.

Please also check out our video: The CARPHA COVID-19 Testing Process

**Incidence Management Team (IMT) - Emergency Response Update**

- **May 22, 2020:** Dr. Fletcher-Lartey and Mr. Williams received a training from Tobago Emergency Management Agency in radio communications is preparation for the coming hurricane season.

**Stakeholder Engagement**

CARPHA is working closely with various stakeholders for a coordinated regional response, and as such has engaged with multiple stakeholders in multiple ways, including the following meetings in which CARPHA participated:

- **May 25, 2020:** Dr. St. John was a panelist at the EU-LAC Webinar about COVID-19 “Scientific Cooperation for the Management of Pandemics”.
- **May 24, 2020:** Dr. St. John was a speaker at The Black Sox Ethical Leadership event on COVID-19 Black Crisis: A Global Community Update.
- **May 22, 2020:** Dr. St. John and Dr. Indar attended a CARICOM Meeting with Cruise Lines Execs to discuss Repatriation.
- **May 22, 2020:** Dr. St. John and Dr. Indar attended CARICOM Sub-committee of the Heads of Government to Advise on Uniform Protocol related to the Repatriation of Cruise Ship Crew Members. Dr Indar presented on guidelines for repatriation.
- **May 21, 2020:** Dr. St. John appeared on Mornin’ Barbados to provide an update on COVID-19.
**Tobacco Use and COVID-19**

Tobacco smoking is known to increase a person’s risk to respiratory infections and their severity. Studies reviewed by health experts on April 29 2020, “found that smokers are more likely to develop severe disease with COVID-19, compared to non-smokers.” Since COVID-19 is a disease known to affect the lungs, it is not surprising that decreased lung function cause by smoking, makes it more difficult for the body of smokers to fight off coronaviruses and other diseases. Tobacco use also increases a person’s risk for being diagnosed with non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease, cancer, diabetes etc. This, therefore, puts persons that smoke at an increased risk for developing severe symptoms and dying if they become infected with COVID-19. *(WHO, 2020)*

**WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY MAY 31, 2020. PROTECTING YOUTH FROM INDUSTRY MANIPULATION AND PREVENTING THEM FROM TOBACCO AND NICOTINE USE.**

- Over 1 million people die from second-hand smoke exposure every year.
- Children and adolescents who use e-cigarettes at least double their chance of smoking cigarettes later in life.
- E-cigarette use increases your risk of heart disease and lung disorders.
- Nicotine in e-cigarettes is a highly addictive drug and can damage children’s developing brains.
- In, 2016, 14.4% (male 16.7%, 12.1%) of adolescents in the Non-Latin Caribbean (12 Member States except Haiti) reported current tobacco use.

There are many tactics in which the Tobacco and related industry use to attract the youth, these are some of them listed below:

- Marketing of over 15,000 flavours appealing to children and adolescents in smokeless tobacco, shisha and e-cigarettes
- Promotion of tobacco products and the distribution of free samples at popular events for young people
- Social media influencers and marketing
- Sponsored events and parties
- School scholarships
- Product placement in entertainment media
- Selling products at eye level for children

Help us to create a Caribbean generation free from the health and other effects of tobacco, nicotine and second-hand smoke. Click [here](#) for more information.

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**RECENT CARPHA PRODUCTS**

- **Precautionary prevention measures implemented by Caribbean Countries (outside travel-related measures)** – May 22, 2020
- **Caribbean Countries that have issued Travel Advisories due to COVID-19** – May 22, 2020
- **Caribbean Countries reopening plans/initiatives post COVID-19**— May 22, 2020
- The following guidelines have been updated:
  - **Interim Guidance about COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease) for Hotels Workers in the Caribbean** - May 13, 2020
  - **Interim Guidance on COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) for Travellers** - May 13, 2020
- Links to Public Education Resources [https://www.carpha.org/What-We-Do/Public-Health/Novel-Coronavirus](https://www.carpha.org/What-We-Do/Public-Health/Novel-Coronavirus)
- Links to Media [https://www.carpha.org/More/Media/Articles](https://www.carpha.org/More/Media/Articles)
- Links to Videos [https://www.youtube.com/user/CARPHACampus](https://www.youtube.com/user/CARPHACampus)

**REFERENCES**

[https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?useExisting=1&layers=c0b356e20b30490c8b8b4c7bb9554e7c&layerId=1](https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?useExisting=1&layers=c0b356e20b30490c8b8b4c7bb9554e7c&layerId=1)