Summary

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic

This is an update to the CARPHA Situation Report published on August 14, 2020, in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To date, there are 143,452 cases in 33 countries/territories (including 24 CARPHA Member States), in the Caribbean Region. The risk of further cases occurring in the Caribbean remains Very High. Countries must continue to focus on interrupting viral transmission and reducing mortality associated with COVID-19, even as they continue a phased lifting of in-country restrictions.

CARPHA is leading the regional health response, actively working with CARICOM Member States and key partners on region-wide approaches to the COVID-19 response. At this time, some Member States are reporting an increase in positive cases as a result of reopening their borders and continued repatriation of nationals. The processes used for receiving incoming travellers have been guided by protocols developed under the gradual ease of restrictions. In all countries, it remains critical that active surveillance and COVID-19 prevention measures, including physical distancing, hand hygiene and wearing of masks in public are maintained.

New in this Report

- Surveillance and Epidemiology of COVID-19 in 24 Member States
- CARPHA’s Medical Microbiology Laboratory Responding to COVID-19

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Globally</td>
<td>21,550,176 cases (819,284 new)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean Region</td>
<td>143,452 cases (6,382 new)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of the World</td>
<td>21,406,724 cases (812,902 new)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13,634,897 recovered (665,839 new)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>764,834 deaths (15,899 new)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Figures reported by WHO supplemented with additional data from local country reports.

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

COVID-19 in the Caribbean

Since the previous report on August 14, 2020, an additional 6,382 cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in 20 countries within the Caribbean, bringing the region’s total confirmed cases to 143,452 in 33 countries/territories. This new total represents a 5% increase in the number of confirmed cases. There were 2,332 deaths recorded in the Caribbean Region as at August 17, 2020.
As of August 17, 2020, the WHO reported 21,549,706 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.

Since the last Situation Report on August 14, 2020, no new countries, areas or territories reported their first confirmed case of COVID-19, while 33 reported no new cases. Figure 1 shows a breakdown of cases by WHO Regions.

As of August 17, 2020, there have been 17,588 cases confirmed from CARPHA Member States (CMS), the highest number was reported on August 15, 2020. Figure 2 shows a distribution of the confirmed cases and incidence rate per 100,000 population in CMS to date.

Data in Figure 2 were extracted from published reports by the WHO and CARPHA Member States Ministries of Health Official websites

Numbers may vary based on the time the information was extracted. See References
Among cases for whom sex was reported, 54% were female and 46% were male (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Percentage of Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 by Sex in CMS, n=1,703

For the cases for which data were available, the majority were between 20 and 59 years, with 40-49 being the modal age group. There was no age reported for the majority of cases (17,005) which are excluded from Figure 5.

Among the 24 Member States, 25% (6/24) have been classified as having sporadic transmission of COVID-19 among cases, 42% (10/24) have reported clusters, 17% (4/24) reported community transmission and 17% (4/24) currently have no cases.

Figure 6 is based on data received by the WHO from national authorities by 10:00 CEST, August 16, 2020.

Among cases for whom sex was reported, 54% were female and 46% were male (Figure 4).

Figure 5: Reported Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 by Age Group in CMS, n=583

Among the 24 Member States, 25% (6/24) have been classified as having sporadic transmission of COVID-19 among cases, 42% (10/24) have reported clusters, 17% (4/24) reported community transmission and 17% (4/24) currently have no cases.

Figure 6 is based on data received by the WHO from national authorities by 10:00 CEST, August 16, 2020.

Laboratory

Since February 10, 2020 and as of August 16, 2020, CARPHA Medical Microbiology Laboratory (CMML) has received 14,578 samples from 16 CMS, 1,000 (6.9%) of which have tested positive since the start of the outbreak, 700 results (4.8%) correspond to unique cases.

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

Figure 7: COVID-19 Progression in CMS*. Laboratory Confirmed New Cases: February 10 — August 16, 2020

*For countries sending samples to CARPHA

CARPHA’S COVID-19 RESPONSE

Stakeholder Engagement and Communication

CARPHA is working closely with various stakeholders for a coordinated regional response. Recent key highlights include:

- **August 17, 2020**: Dr. St. John, Executive Director, participated in a Joint Consultation by PAHO and Gavi on COVAX Facility.
- **August 17, 2020**: CARPHA’s Executive Management Team attended and participated in a Special Emergency meeting of the CARICOM Heads of Government meeting. The Agency presented on “COVID-19 Regional Update: Living with COVID-19 for the long haul and Public Health Considerations for Economic Recovery through Reopening Borders and Resuming Travel in the CARICOM Region”.
- **August 13, 2020**: Dr. Lisa Indar, Assistant Director – SDPC, participated in the 31st Meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism hosted by the Association of Caribbean States (ACS). Dr. Indar presented on “COVID-19, and the tourism and health program for sustainable tourism and COVID-19 Management”.
- **August 13, 2020**: CARPHA prepared an updated prevention and control infographic to be distributed to MS for use in public health campaign
- **August 12, 2020**: Dr. St. John, Executive Director, participated in a Meeting with the Caribbean Association of Fire Chiefs. The development of a Memorandum of Understanding and protocols for the safe conduct of duties in COVID-19 times were discussed.
- **August 12, 2020**: CARPHA issued the media release CARPHA Turnaround Time for Testing Remains Consistent with No Test Results Pending emphasising its commitment to CMS to provide all testing results within 24—48 hrs and highlighting its success in doing so to date. Click [here](#) to read the full release.
- **August 12, 2020**: CARPHA’s EMT participated in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) meeting on Technical Working Group Meeting on Ecolog Proposal for COVID-19 testing.
- **August 12, 2020**: Dr. St. John, Dr. Indar and members of the IMT-ER attended PAHO/WHO’s ”Virtual Consultation on the COVAX Facility”, a global facilitation of the distribution of COVID-19 vaccine. Representatives from CARPHA Member States were also in attendance
- **August 12, 2020**: Dr. Boodram presented on Health Disaster Risk Reduction during the webinar on “Early Action Early Warning Systems”, jointly hosted by the International Federation of Red Cross and United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. The objective of the webinar was to promote advocacy for the implementation and improvement of early warning, early action in the region, in preparation for gradual return to new normality in the context of COVID-19.
- **August 11, 2020**: Dr. St. John, presented a COVID-19 update to the Meeting of Directors of National Drug Councils of CARPHA Member States.
- **August 11, 2020**: Dr. Lisa Indar, AD SDPC, presented COVID-19 update to the CARICOM Special Session on “COVID-19 and the Services Sector”.

CARPHA PRODUCTS

- **Caribbean Countries Reopening Plans/Initiatives Post COVID-19**—August 13, 2020
- **Caribbean Countries that have issued Travel Advisories due to COVID-19** – August 13, 2020
- **Interim Guidance for the Reopening of Food Establishments and Bars during the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Caribbean**—August 13, 2020—NEW
- 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)
CARPHA’s Medical Microbiology Laboratory Responding to COVID-19

CARPHA’s Medical Microbiology Laboratory (CMML) as the regional reference laboratory, is providing Direct Outbreak Support with Diagnostic Testing. CMML is conducting tests for suspected COVID-19 cases for 16 CMS routinely, and to other CARICOM Member States (CMS) as requested. CMML is providing timely laboratory services for COVID-19 at 18 hours/day, 7 days/week from February 10th to August 16th, 2020, the CMML has tested 14,578 samples for SARS-CoV-2 from 16 CMS.

In response to COVID-19, the CMML has strengthened its capacity by instituting two work shifts (6.00 – 2.00 pm, 2.00 – 10.00 pm) to ensure CMS access to timely, accurate results within 24-48 hours and by recruiting three (3) additional laboratory technologists. In addition, it has implemented a quality control system to monitor the health of CMML staff.

CMML is also building CMS capacities to respond to COVID-19 effectively through:

- Distribution of Verification Panels to public and private laboratories to support the implementation of national/local testing for COVID-19 by CMS. The panels serve as an external check which validates the capability of the laboratory to provide accurate and reliable results.
- The CariPHLN network which provided regional laboratory reach and harmonization.
- Conducting Webinars for National Laboratory Directors to share information on laboratory diagnostic options, laboratory biosafety considerations and lessons from the field for implementing testing in CMS. More than 300 persons across 17 CMS have benefited to date.
- The hosting of Biosafety and Biosecurity sessions as part of the national implementation of COVID-19 testing in CMS.
- Conducting Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Training including a sensitization session on the proper use of face masks for CARPHA staff.
- Communication/Public Education Products which includes: Laboratory updates (14) and CariPHLN Bulletins, technical guidance documents (Guidance on Use of Masks, Statement on Glove Use, Selection and Evaluation of Diagnostic Kits for COVID-19), a video on the Testing Process. Click here for video and contributed to COVID-19 Situation Reports.

REGIONAL COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS FOR REOPENING OF BORDERS AND RESUMING TRAVEL IN THE CARICOM REGION

CARPHA, as part of its mandate in leading the regional health response to COVID-19, has developed a suite of “Health Considerations” to successfully exit the COVID-19 lockdown, reopen borders and resume travel. As of June 2020, CARICOM countries started a phased re-opening of their borders and businesses and as expected, have experienced an increase in imported COVID-19 cases. Re-opening and recovery require a careful balance between reducing restrictive measures and ensuring adequate measures are implemented to reduce importation and spread of new cases, and to ensure that capacity is ramped up to rapidly identify, test, isolate and trace contacts of new cases. In the absence of a vaccine, COVID-19 will continue to be a grave public health, security, and economic threat. The full document can be accessed at here and infographics here.

REFERENCES

Sources: