Summary

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic

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

To date, there are 149,880 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 easing 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 distributes PPES to countries

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Confirmed Cases</th>
<th>Recovered</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Globally</td>
<td>22,492,864</td>
<td>14,513,359</td>
<td>786,068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean Region</td>
<td>149,880</td>
<td>80,034</td>
<td>2,439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of the World</td>
<td>22,342,984</td>
<td>14,513,359</td>
<td>786,068</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

SITUATION UPDATE

COVID-19 in the Caribbean

Since the previous report on August 19, 2020, an additional 2,824 cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in 20 countries within the Caribbean, bringing the region’s total confirmed cases to 149,880 in 33 countries/territories. This new total represents a 2% increase in the number of confirmed cases. There were 2,439 deaths recorded in the Caribbean Region as at August 21, 2020.
As of August 21, 2020, the WHO reported 22,492,312 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 19, 2020, no new countries, areas or territories reported their first confirmed case of COVID-19, while 48 reported no new cases. Figure 1 shows a breakdown of cases by WHO Regions.

As of August 21, 2020, there have been 19,436 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, 53% were female and 47% were male (Figure 4).

![Figure 4: Percentage of Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 by Sex in CMS, n=1,886](image)

For the cases for which data were available, the majority were between 20 and 59 years, with 30-39 being the modal age group. There was no age reported for the majority of cases (18,847) which are excluded from Figure 5.

![Figure 5: Reported Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 by Age Group in CMS, n=589](image)

Among the 24 Member States, 25% (6/24) have been classified as having sporadic transmission of COVID-19 among cases, 38% (9/24) have reported clusters, 21% (5/24) reported community transmission and 17% (4/24) currently have no cases (Figure 6).

![Figure 6: Categories of Transmission Classification within the Region](image)

Figure 6 is based on data reported on the WHO Dashboard. See references.

Among cases for whom sex was reported, 53% were female and 47% were male (Figure 4).

![Figure 7: COVID-19 Progression in CMS*. Laboratory Confirmed New Cases: February 10 — August 20, 2020](image)

Laboratory

Since February 10, 2020 and as of August 20, 2020, CARPHA Medical Microbiology Laboratory (CMML) has received 15,742 samples from 16 CMS, 1,082 (6.9%) of which have tested positive since the start of the outbreak, 807 results (5.1%) correspond to unique cases.

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

*For countries sending samples to CARPHA
### Stakeholder Engagement and Communication

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

- **August 19, 2020**: Dr. St. John, Executive Director attended the Meeting of the Steering Committee for the CARICOM WHO Solidarity Clinical Trial.

- **August 19, 2020**: CARPHA, in recognition of the growing challenges to sound waste management as a result of the increase in general and infectious waste associated with managing COVID-19, has produced a **Fact Sheet** and infographics targeting **Solid Waste Managers** and **Households**. These resources aim at providing strategies that can be applied in various contexts, and are available on CARPHA’s [website](https://www.carpha.org).

- **August 17, 2020**: The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and the Regional Security System (RSS) teamed up to help Member States prevent and reduce the spread of the COVID-19, with air lifted supplies of personal protective equipment (PPEs). CARPHA has a long-standing partnership with the RSS, having collaborated to respond to public health emergencies such as hurricanes. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the RSS has worked with CARPHA to transport samples for coronavirus testing from Member States. In July, the People’s Republic of China donated 15,000 throat swab test kits and 30,000 medical face masks to CARPHA for distribution to nine (9) CARPHA Member States. Over the next week, the RSS will assist CARPHA to deliver these critical supplies and equipment to Member States.

- **August 17, 2020**: CARPHA attended the 11th Special Meeting of the CARICOM Heads of Government held by video conference on Monday 17 August. Dr. the Honourable Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Chair of the Conference of Heads of Government presided over the meeting. Dr. Joy St. John, Executive Director, 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”. The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency also presented.

With the Region now in the hurricane season, the Heads of Government received proposals for handling and responding to such an event within the current pandemic, recognizing the added significant complexity and impact on regional response efforts. The Heads of Government acknowledged the progress of the COVID-19 Tourism Task Force, of which CARPHA is a member, in developing tourism guidelines and training workers; and agreed to support approaches that promote testing before travellers leave the sending countries and on arrival in the Member State. This would promote sustainability of the return of safe tourism in the CARICOM. As one of the actions arising from the meeting, the Heads of Government mandated CARPHA to prepare a framework for the protocols to operate a bubble within the Region to facilitate travel and boost domestic tourism.

- **August 17, 2020**: Dr. Joy St. John, Executive Director, participated in a Joint Consultation by PAHO and Gavi on COVAX Facility.

- **August 14, 2020**: Dr. St. John participated and presented at the Forty-Seventh Annual General Meeting of the Regional Nursing Body (RNB)

### CARPHA PRODUCTS

- **Caribbean Countries that have issued Travel Advisories due to COVID-19**—August 20, 2020.
- **Caribbean Countries reopening plans/initiatives post COVID19**—August 20, 2020.
- **Infographic—COVID-19 Solid Waste Management for the General Public: Potentially Infectious Household Waste** NEW
- **COVID-19 Fact Sheet on Solid Waste Management (SWM) and the Human Health and Environmental Impacts**
- **Infographic—Solid Waste Management Managers: Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 and SWM on Human Health and the Environment**
- **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 COVID-19 laboratory services 18 hours/day, 7 days/week. From February 10th to August 20th, 2020, the CMML has tested 15,742 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. Additionally, the health surveillance program was enhanced 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 provides regional laboratory reach and harmonization.
- Conducting Webinars for National Laboratory Directors and CariPHLN membership 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 include: 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); contributions to COVID-19 Situation Reports; and a video on the Testing Process (available here).

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.

Sources: (1) WHO Situation Dashboard Accessed at 1:00pm August 21, 2020. Available from: https://who.sprinklr.com/