Summary

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic

This is an update to the CARPHA Situation Report published on August 21, 2020, in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To date, there are 156,790 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. A few countries have reported clusters and some level of community transmission. 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
• Building Capacity for COVID-19 response through the CR-FELTP

SITUATION UPDATE

COVID-19 in the Caribbean

Since the previous report on August 21, 2020, an additional 6,910 cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in 23 countries within the Caribbean, bringing the region’s total confirmed cases to 156,790 in 33 countries/territories. This new total represents a 5% increase in the number of confirmed cases. There were 2,549 deaths recorded in the Caribbean Region as at August 24, 2020.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total Confirmed Cases</th>
<th>Recovered</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Globally</td>
<td>23,312,220 cases</td>
<td>15,097,054</td>
<td>803,864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean Region</td>
<td>156,790 cases</td>
<td>84,006</td>
<td>2,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of the World</td>
<td>21,641,040 cases</td>
<td>16,250,000</td>
<td>720,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Figures reported by WHO supplemented with additional data from local country reports.
As of August 24, 2020, the WHO reported 23,311,719 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 21, 2020, no new countries, areas or territories reported their first confirmed case of COVID-19, while 35 reported no new cases. Figure 1 shows a breakdown of cases by WHO Regions.

As of August 24, 2020, there have been 20,867 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.

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 August 20, 2020.
Since February 10, 2020 and as of August 23, 2020, CARPHA Medical Microbiology Laboratory (CMML) has received samples from 16 CMS, 870 results correspond to unique cases.

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

Laboratory

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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 24, 2020:** Dr. St. John participated in an interview with HCC NCDA Solidarity Grant on CARPHA’s responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and priorities and recommendations for accelerating and strengthening NCD prevention and control post-COVID-19.

- **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.

- **August 17, 2020:** The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and the Regional Security System (RSS) teamed up to air lift supplies of personal protective equipment (PPEs), to assist -Member States prevent and reduce the spread of the COVID-19. 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, CARPHA, 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.

CARPHA PRODUCTS

- **Caribbean Countries that have issued Travel Advisories due to COVID-19**—August 20, 2020.
- **Infographic—COVID-19 Solid Waste Management for the General Public: Potentially Infectious Household Waste**
- **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)
Building Capacity for COVID-19 response through the CR-FELTP

The Caribbean Regional Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Programme (CR-FELTP) is a training programme designed for health professionals from diverse backgrounds, who want to contribute to building Caribbean capacity to implement evidence-based health actions and policies, to prevent disease, and to promote and protect health. The programme, based on service and on-the-job learning, provides basic training in applied epidemiology, public health and laboratory science. To date, over 250 programme graduates from Ministries of Health actively apply field skills in outbreak investigation and management to support national COVID-19 response, highlighting the value of this programme.

Between April 20th to May 7th, the CR-FELTP conducted a 3-week retraining mini-course for its graduates to refresh their skills for use in their country’s COVID-19 response. The focus was on the basic skills of outbreak investigation, surveillance and data analysis. In addition to the theoretical sessions, participants were presented with a case simulation on COVID-19. A total of 24 persons from eight (8) countries participated in the retraining. The countries represented were Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

The CR-FELTP coordinator also supported the two rounds of training for law enforcement officers organized collaboratively between the CARPHA, CARICOM Implementing Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative-Connect (CBSI-Connect). The two half-day virtual training sessions held in May and July, focused on the Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in Law Enforcement. Over 500 persons from 20 CARPHA Member States participated in the virtual session.

The CR-FELTP is also responsible for collating CARPHA’s COVID-19 capacity building activities. From March 2020, 23 training sessions were delivered to 3,898 persons in CARPHA Member States via Zoom. Training sessions were in the areas of Tourism and Health, Personal Protection, Coding of COVID-19 deaths and retraining for FELTP graduates. From September to December, CARPHA COVID-19 Health Rounds will commence with Healt Guidelines for Reopening of the Hospitality Sector.

In light of the travel restrictions still enforced, and the rise in eLearning the CR-FELTP has recognized the need for expanding its online training options. Plans are in place for the development of region-specific modules in Contact Tracing, and Simulations for Outbreak Investigation. The courses will be piloted early in 2021. Currently, the CR-FELTP is working with 3 countries to pilot the first virtual Frontline-FELTP. The success of these courses would mean an increase in the eLearning options available to train Caribbean public health practitioners in field epidemiology thus enabling them to respond to public health issues in the Caribbean through surveillance and outbreak investigation.

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. The full document can be found here.

REFERENCES

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