Summary

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic

This is an update to the CARPHA Situation Report published on August 24, 2020, in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To date, there are 161,097 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 CARPHA’s Field Epidemiology Program

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE*

Globally
24,021,605 cases (709,385 new)

Caribbean Region
33 countries, areas, or territories
161,097 cases (4,307 new)
87,593 recovered (3,587 new)
2,648 deaths (99 new)

Rest of the World
182 countries, areas, or territories and international conveyances
23,860,508 cases (705,078 new)
15,764,484 recovered (667,430 new)
818,816 deaths (14,952 new)

* 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 24, 2020, an additional 4,307 cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in 23 countries within the Caribbean, bringing the region’s total confirmed cases to 161,067 in 33 countries/territories. This new total represents a 3% increase in the number of confirmed cases. There were 2,648 deaths recorded in the Caribbean Region as at August 27, 2020.
As of August 27, 2020, the WHO reported 24,021,218 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 24, 2020, no new countries, areas or territories reported their first confirmed case of COVID-19, while 29 reported no new cases. Figure 1 shows a breakdown of cases by WHO Regions.

As of August 27, 2020, there have been 22,325 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

As of August 27, 2020, there were 741 cases from international conveyances.

Active cases = Total cases – (Number of cases recovered + Number of deaths)
Since February 10, 2020 and as of August 26, 2020, CARPHA Medical Microbiology Laboratory (CMML) has received samples from 16 CMS; 939 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

Since February 10, 2020 and as of August 26, 2020, CARPHA Medical Microbiology Laboratory (CMML) has received samples from 16 CMS; 939 results correspond to unique cases.

Figure 7 is based on data reported on the WHO Dashboard. See references.
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 26, 2020:** Dr. St. John attended the Inaugural Meeting of the UWI Centre for Biosecurity Studies Steering Committee.

• **August 26, 2020:** CARICOM circulated the Savingram on the Requirements for the CARICOM Bubble based on recommendations developed by CARPHA.

• **August 26, 2020:** Dr. St. John recorded a short statement to celebrate UWITV, the public information and education service of The University of the West Indies to commemorate the one-year mark since UWITV went live as a dedicated 24-hour cable channel on FLOW EVO, showcasing original Caribbean-focused programming to millions across 15 nations in the region.

• **August 25, 2020:** Dr. St. John presented CARPHA updates at the CDEMA Core Coordination meeting.

• **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:** Representatives from CARPHA attended the 11th Special Meeting of the CARICOM Heads of Government. Dr. St. John 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.

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

CARPHA PRODUCTS

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 here and infographics here.

- **Caribbean Countries that have issued Travel Advisories due to COVID-19**—August 20, 2020.
- **Caribbean Countries reopening plans/initiatives post COVID019**—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

Links to Media https://www.carpha.org/More/Media/Articles

Links to Videos 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, 2020, 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 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, 2020, focused on the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in Law Enforcement. Over 500 persons from 20 CARPHA Member States participated in the virtual sessions.

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, 2020, CARPHA COVID-19 Health Rounds will commence with Health 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.

REFERENCES

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