

# 100<sup>th</sup> SITUATION REPORT

CARPHA COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

The Caribbean Public Health Agency is the Caribbean region's collective response to strengthening health systems and addressing public health challenges which threaten development.

To obtain additional information, please contact:

Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)  
16-18 Jamaica Boulevard Federation Park  
Port of Spain  
Trinidad and Tobago

Tel: 868-299-0895  
Fax: 868-622-2792  
Email: [postmaster@carpha.org](mailto:postmaster@carpha.org)  
Website: <https://carpha.org/>

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# INTRODUCTION

In commemoration of our **100th Situation Report**, the Caribbean Public Health Agency is pleased to present this special publication that chronicles the Agency's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

CARPHA has been leading the regional public health response to COVID-19, in keeping with its Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) mandate. We are managing this as a health security issue, working closely with CARPHA Member States (CMS), CARICOM, and regional and international coordinating partners. CARPHA activated its Incident Management Team-Emergency Response (IMT-ER) on January 21st, 2020 and convened the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for Health Security (RCM-HS) to help prepare for and respond to the threat. The RCM-HS has also supported CMS in the prevention of further transmission of cases. CARPHA continues to work with its partners and CMS, towards a harmonised regional response.

The first Situation Report was produced on 21st January, and was initially developed as a tool to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic globally and assess the risk of its arrival to the Caribbean region and CARPHA Member States. Since then, the Situation Report has evolved to serve as a means of providing Member States and other stakeholders with reliable epidemiological updates on COVID-19, updates from the CARPHA Medical Microbiology Laboratory and a summary of CARPHA's stakeholder engagement. The report also serves as a platform to disseminate news and information on CARPHA's response to COVID-19 and to share technical documents, such as guidelines and associated infographics, and other communication tools which have been developed by CARPHA's staff.

The first case confirmed within CARICOM was reported on 10th March 2020. As of October 12th 2020, there are **243,600 confirmed cases in 33 countries** in the Caribbean region. CARICOM Member States (CMS) are within the first wave of the pandemic. There is a potential for subsequent waves of unknown duration. The risk of further importation of cases to the tourism dependent Caribbean region 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. In this regard, we urge countries to continue ramping up their surveillance capacity to rapidly screen, identify, test, isolate and trace contacts of new cases supported by public health prevention and control measures of social distancing, wearing of masks, and hand hygiene.

CARPHA remains committed to providing technical support to our Member States, and to continue "holding your hands" as we forge ahead together to mitigate this pandemic in order to achieve a safe economic recovery.

**Dr Lisa Indar**

Director, Surveillance, Disease Prevention and Control

## REGIONAL COORDINATION



- CARPHA alerted the Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) of the developing situation in China (Jan. 4)
- Activated its IMT-ER (Jan. 21)
- Convened the first RCM-HS (Jan. 29)



Participated in meetings and produced technical documents for CARICOM for Special Heads of Government (12 meetings to date) CMOs (3), Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD)(5)



Daily/real time coordination through CMOs, IMT-ER, Expert Advisory Group (EAG), WhatsApp chats



Produced CARICOM documents such as: Travel Bubble for CARICOM; Common Public Health policy; Guidelines for Managing Illness on Ships; Repatriation



Regional Guidelines for Reopening



Core coordination: CARICOM, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), University of the West Indies (UWI), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Expert Advisory Group and COVID-19 Tourism Task Force

## CARICOM TRAVEL BUBBLE

- Countries within the CARICOM bubble should be in the low-risk category (no new cases or less than 20 cases/100,000 in past 14 days)
- No testing and no quarantine
- \* Each country that moves out of the 'low-risk' category should be assessed on a case by case basis



**DEC 8<sup>TH</sup> 2019**

Onset of symptoms in first known case of pneumonia with unknown aetiology in Wuhan City, China

**JAN 21<sup>ST</sup> 2020**

Activation of IMT-ER

**JAN 21<sup>ST</sup> 2020**

1st Situation Report produced

**JAN 23<sup>RD</sup> 2020**

Risk of COVID-19 to Caribbean is Low

**JAN 29<sup>TH</sup> 2020**

Assembly of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for Health Security (RCM-HS)

# SECTORAL COORDINATION

Security Cluster and other sectors at the regional and national levels

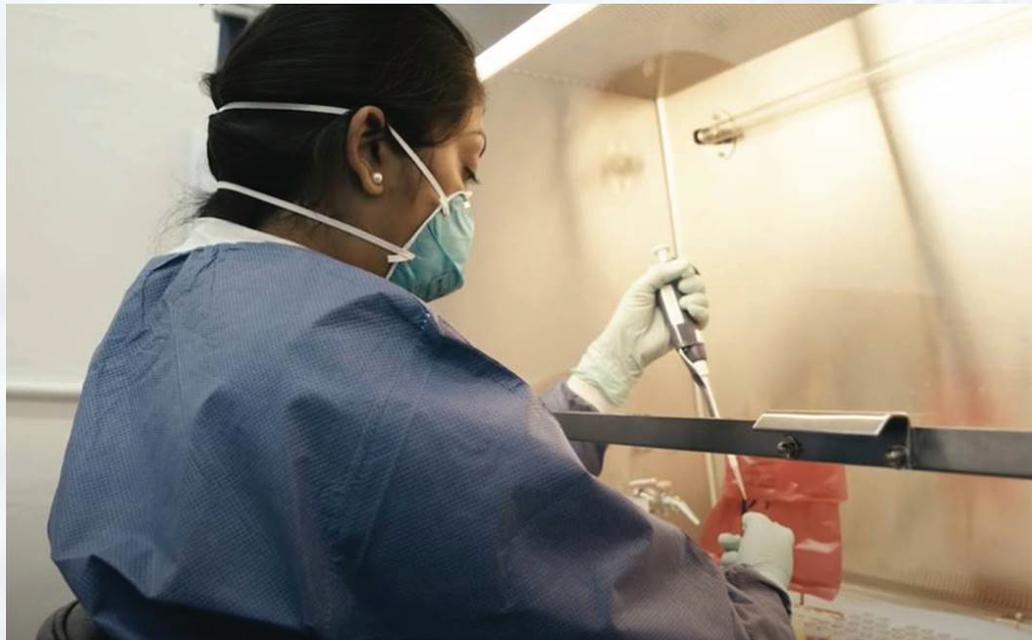


**Dr Lisa Indar**, Director Surveillance, Disease Prevention and Control; **Dr Joy St John** Executive Director at the 31st Inter-Sessional Meeting of CARICOM Heads, 18-19 Feb 2020, Barbados



<p><b>JAN 30<sup>TH</sup> 2020</b></p>	<p><b>FEB 5<sup>TH</sup> 2020</b></p>	<p><b>FEB 6<sup>TH</sup> 2020</b></p>	<p><b>FEB 21<sup>ST</sup> 2020</b></p>	<p><b>FEB 26<sup>TH</sup> 2020</b></p>
<p>COVID-19 declared Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) by the World Health Organization (WHO)</p>	<p>CARPHA Medical Microbiology Laboratory (CMML) ready to accept specimens for diagnostic testing</p>	<p>Establishment of Expert Technical Advisory Group</p>	<p>Initiation of Joint PAHO and CARPHA Regional COVID-19 coordination meetings</p>	<p>Risk of COVID-19 to Caribbean raised from Low to Moderate to High</p>

# LABORATORY TESTING, SURVEILLANCE, VERIFICATION OF PCR TESTS FOR CARPHA MEMBER STATES



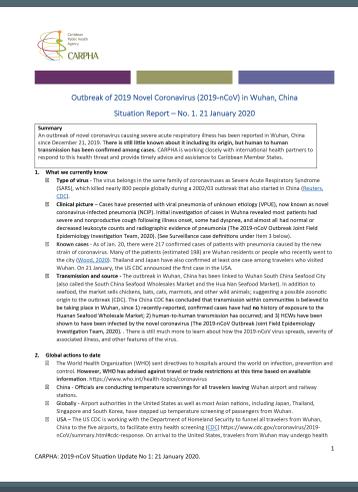
REGIONAL REFERENCE LABORATORY	OUTPUT	ENGAGEMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducts tests for suspected COVID-19 cases for all CARPHA Member States (CMS) routinely as requested</li> <li>• Produces verifications test panels for selected CMS laboratories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn around time of between 24-48 hours</li> <li>• More than 25,000 samples tested to date</li> <li>• Guidance for selection and evaluation of diagnostic test kits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular laboratory updates and advisories</li> <li>• Laboratory turn around dashboard on CARPHA website</li> <li>• CariPHLN bulletins</li> <li>• Capacity building in laboratory diagnostic and biosafety/ biosecurity for more than 600 persons in 17 CMS</li> </ul>

<b>MAR 1<sup>ST</sup> 2020</b>	<b>MAR 2020</b>	<b>MAR 1<sup>ST</sup> 2020</b>	<b>MAR 5<sup>TH</sup> 2020</b>	<b>MAR 10<sup>TH</sup> 2020</b>
CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting	1st Guidelines distributed: <i>COVID-19 Health Guidelines for Hospitality: Hotels and Guesthouses</i>	1st confirmed case of COVID-19 in the Caribbean Region	Risk of COVID-19 to Caribbean raised from Moderate to High to Very High	COVID-19 declared a pandemic by WHO

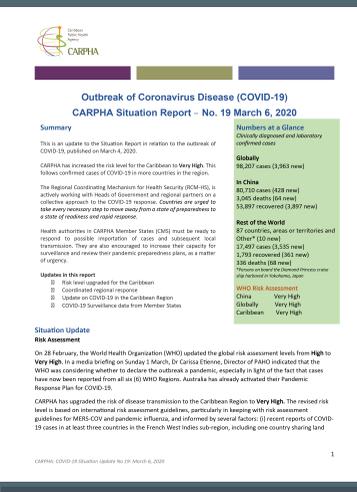
# EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE



100 Situation Reports (twice weekly)



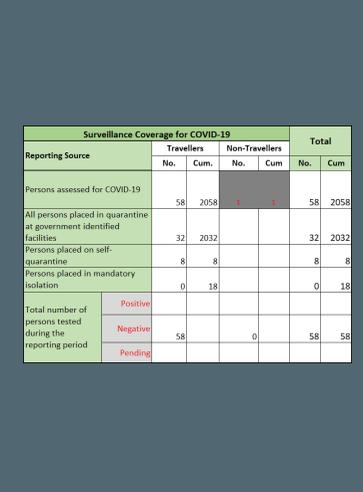
Weekly Country Reopening Measures and Requirements



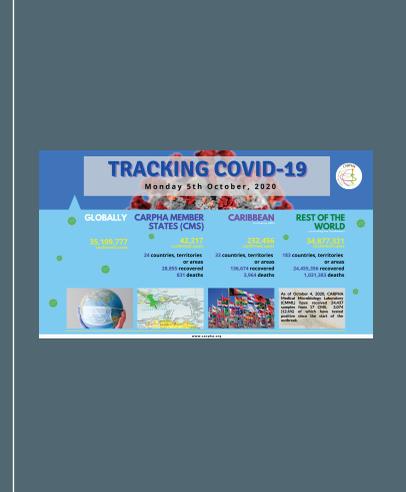
Weekly COVID-19 tracking on CARPHA website



Enhanced syndromic surveillance form to capture COVID-19 cases



Survey and gap analysis on level of CARPHA Member States pandemic preparedness



COVID-19 Surveillance Database and Line listing for CARPHA Member States



MAR 10<sup>TH</sup> 2020

1st confirmed case of COVID-19 in a CARPHA Member State

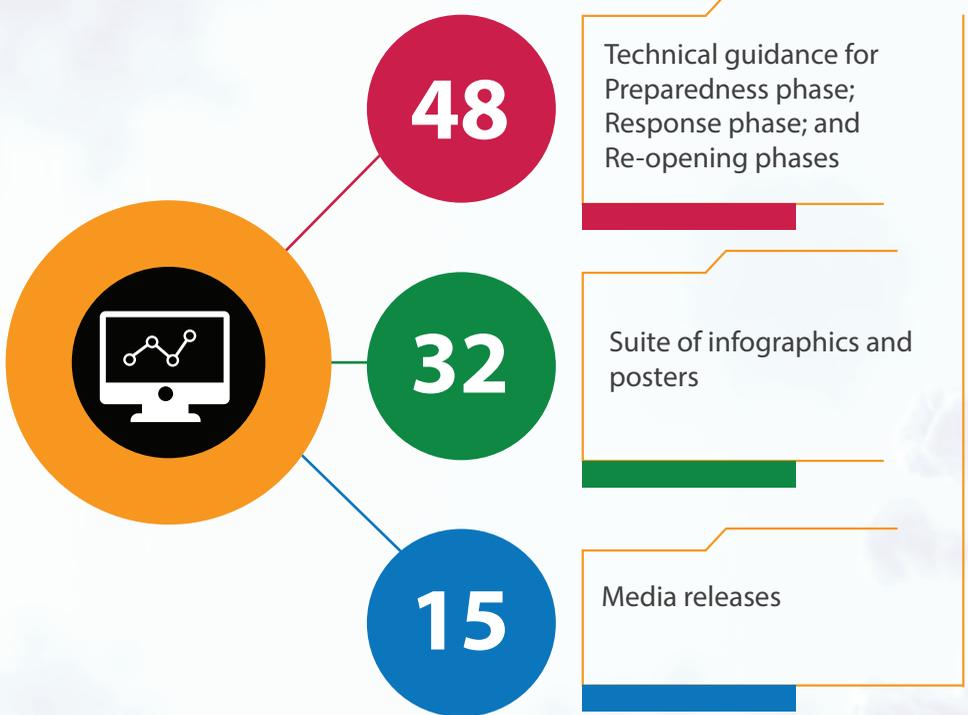
MAR 21<sup>ST</sup> 2020

Approximate date borders closed in CARPHA Member States

MAR 24<sup>TH</sup> 2020

RCMHS: Public Health Thematic Working Group discussion

# TECHNICAL GUIDANCE, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION



48

Technical guidance for Preparedness phase; Response phase; and Re-opening phases

32

Suite of infographics and posters

15

Media releases

Comprehensive suite of Regional Proactive Health Measures developed by CARPHA to support health and tourism response, consisting of early warning and response system, standards, capacity building and partnerships.

## TRAVELLERS HEALTH AND COVID-19 TRACKER APPS

- Real time Caribbean travellers' information at your fingertips
- Information on health alerts, vaccine requirements and local health facilities, accommodations using proactive healthier, safer measures with Caribbean traveller's health stamp for Healthier Safer Tourism
- Allows for immediate reporting of illness
- Travellers health prevention and control measures

Supported by the Regional Health Communication Network (RHCN), CARPHA has successfully engaged with a wide and diverse target audience, including policy makers, health professionals, health promotion/education personnel, media, vulnerable groups and the public. Community engagement is done through traditional and social media, face to face and/or virtual meetings.



**MAR 27<sup>TH</sup> 2020**  
 1st "Caribbean Countries that have issued Travel Advisories due to COVID-19" document posted on CARPHA website

**MAR 31<sup>ST</sup> 2020**  
 1st Situation Report Infographic produced

**APR 6<sup>TH</sup> 2020**  
 Confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported in 24 CMS

**APR 15<sup>TH</sup> 2020**  
 1st "Caribbean Countries that implemented precautionary prevention measures (outside of travel-related measures) due to COVID-19" document posted on CARPHA website

# CAPACITY BUILDING



## VIRTUAL TRAININGS AND WEBINARS FOR KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Update on various laboratory diagnostic options
- Use of PPE by law enforcement officers (May, July)
- Evaluation of testing methods (Ongoing)
- Tourism and Health Safety series with accompanying certificate and eligibility for traveller's health stamp for healthier safer tourism (June-September)
- COVID-19 guidelines for target populations (e.g. vulnerable populations)
- COVID-19 sectoral guidelines for reopening (August-September)
- Multi hazard approaches for natural disasters and communicable disease management during the COVID-19 pandemic
- CARPHA Health Rounds Series



**MAY 22<sup>ND</sup> 2020**

**JUN 11<sup>TH</sup> 2020**

**JUN 30<sup>TH</sup> 2020**

**JUL 1<sup>ST</sup> 2020**

**JUL 30<sup>TH</sup> 2020**

1st Caribbean Countries reopening plans/ initiatives posted on CARPHA website

21st CARPHA Executive Board Meeting

1st Caribbean Tourism Health Training Series COVID-19 Health Guidelines for Reopening Hospitality Sector and Syndromic Surveillance and Tourism Health Information System (THIS)

Approximate date borders began reopening

Scaling up of COVID-19 testing

## VACCINES, MEDICINES, RESOURCE MOBILISATION AND PROCUREMENT

- COVID-19 Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) grant and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) grant to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Re-purposed European Union, Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and World Bank grants to facilitate COVID-19 procurement, rapid response, and vaccine
- Individual procurement and working with US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for regional procurement
- Regional needs lists (PPEs, media, test kits)
- In collaboration with CDEMA: to distribute 125,000 N95 and 4 million surgical masks to Member States
- In collaboration with the Regional Security System (RSS), facilitated the distribution of 30,000 Medical face masks and 15,000 swabs donated by the Government of the People's Republic of China
- Weekly updates of COVID-19 Treatments
- Product recommendations based on verification review of COVID-19 products with emergency use authorisation for COVID-19 (Medicines, Vaccines, Test kits): 2 new kits recommended by CARPHA.
- Alerts for falsified COVID-19 products
- Participate in COVAX Facility to facilitate equitable distribution of vaccines to Caribbean countries.

## COVID -19 TOURISM TASK FORCE



Caribbean Public Health Agency



Caribbean Tourism Organization



Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association



Global Tourism Resilience and Crisis Management Centre

**AUG 12<sup>TH</sup> 2019**

CARPHA's *Regional Public Health Considerations for Reopening and Resuming Travel in the CARICOM Region* disseminated

**SEP 2<sup>ND</sup> 2020**

Launch of CARPHA Health Rounds Series

**SEP 11<sup>TH</sup> 2020**

Special Emergency Session of CARICOM Heads of Government

**SEP 11<sup>TH</sup> 2020**

CARICOM Heads of Government agreed to a Regional Travel Bubble

**OCT 12<sup>TH</sup> 2020**

100<sup>TH</sup> Situation Report published

# INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS (IDP)

- Agence Française de Développement
- Caribbean Community
- Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security
- Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
- Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association
- Caribbean Tourism Organization
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- European Union

- Government of Canada
- Government of the People's Republic of China
- Inter-American Development Bank
- Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States
- Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
- Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization
- Regional Security System
- University of the West Indies
- World Bank



Caribbean  
Public Health  
Agency

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