

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic

CARPHA Situation Report No. 35 - April 20, 2020

Summary

This is an update to the Situation Report published on April 17, 2020, in relation to the outbreak of COVID-19.

To date, there are 8,471 cases in 33 countries/territories (including 24 CARPHA Member States), in the Caribbean Region. The risk of further importation of cases to the rest of the Caribbean remains **Very High**.

The Regional Coordinating Mechanism for Health Security (RCM-HS), is actively working with Heads of Government and regional partners on a collective approach to the COVID-19 response.

Countries are strongly urged to strengthen their health sector response and move to a state of rapid response.

NEW in this report

- **New confirmed cases in CARICOM Member States**
- **WHO COVID-19 strategy update**
- **Exploration the repurposing of existing vaccines**
- **CARPHA's call for Experts**
- **CariPHLN Update**

*CARPHA is providing updated reports on cases in CARPHA Member States as information becomes available through local sources. Caribbean numbers presented in this report may not necessarily be reflected in the WHO totals.

Situation Update

Up to 33 countries in the Caribbean region have reported the importation of at least one confirmed case of COVID-19. The risk of further importation of cases to the Caribbean Region remains **Very High**.

The aim for all countries now, is to **stop transmission, prevent the spread of the virus and save lives**. Based on the Draft CARPHA Health Sector Response Guidelines for COVID-19 circulated to Member States, most countries are encouraged to implement actions in keeping with the Initial or Targeted Action in the Response Phase.

Numbers at a Glance*

Clinically diagnosed and laboratory confirmed cases

Globally

2,285,246 cases (210,691 new)

In the Caribbean Region

33 countries, areas, or territories (0 new)
8,471 cases (1,369 new)
1,101 recovered (282 new)
413 deaths (56 new)

Rest of the World

179 countries, areas, or territories and Other** (0 new)
2,276,775 cases (209,322 new)
634,210 recovered (79,833 new)
154,711 deaths (15,690 new)

**Persons on board the Diamond Princess Cruise Ship harboured in Yokohama, Japan

WHO Risk Assessment

China	Very High
Globally	Very High
Caribbean	Very High

Overview of COVID-19 Cases

COVID-19 in the Caribbean

Since the previous report on April 17, 2020, no new countries reported their first confirmed case of COVID-19 within the Caribbean region. Additional cases, however, were confirmed in 17 countries, bringing the region's total confirmed cases to 8,471 in 33 countries/territories; 24 (72%) of these are CARPHA Member States. This new total represents a 19% increase in the numbers of confirmed cases. Fifty-six (56) additional deaths were also recorded, bringing the total numbers of deaths to 413.

COVID-19 Globally

The data contained in Table 1 below are obtained from data reported by the WHO, supplemented by other sources – (Reference 1 and 2 in Table 1). As of April 20, 2020, the WHO reported 2,285,210 cases of patients with COVID-19. Outside of China, 212 countries, areas or territories have confirmed at least one case among travellers exposed while abroad and/or person-to-person contact. No new countries have reported their first confirmed case of COVID-19 since the last Situation Report on April 17, 2020. See Table 2 below for more details on cases, deaths and recoveries. The number of cases recovered since our last report was not available.

Table 1: Countries or Territories with reported cases of COVID-19, 20 April, 2020

Region	Country/Territory	Cases	# new cases since last report	Deaths	Recovered	% of cases still active [¥]
Region of the Americas						
Caribbean	Dominican Republic	4,680	925	226	363	87.4
	Rest of the Caribbean*	1,196	84	68	337	66.1
	Puerto Rico	1213	170	62	0	94.9
	Cuba	1035	173	34	255	72.1
	Martinique	163	4	12	73	47.9
	Guadeloupe	148	3	11	73	43.2
Americas	Rest of the Region**	850,196	113,665	40,202	122,089	80.9
Other Regions	Western Pacific Region**	132,438	4,843	5,648	97,443	22.2
	European Region**	1,122,189	71,318	100,938	334,932	61.2
	South-East Asia Region**	27,975	4,415	1239	5,812	74.8
	Eastern Mediterranean Region**	128,505	12,681	6,009	68,652	41.9
	African Region**	14,760	2,400	662	4,638	64.1
Other	International conveyance (Diamond Princess Cruise Ship)	712	0	13	644	7.7
	Total	2,285,210	210,681	155,124	635,311	65.4

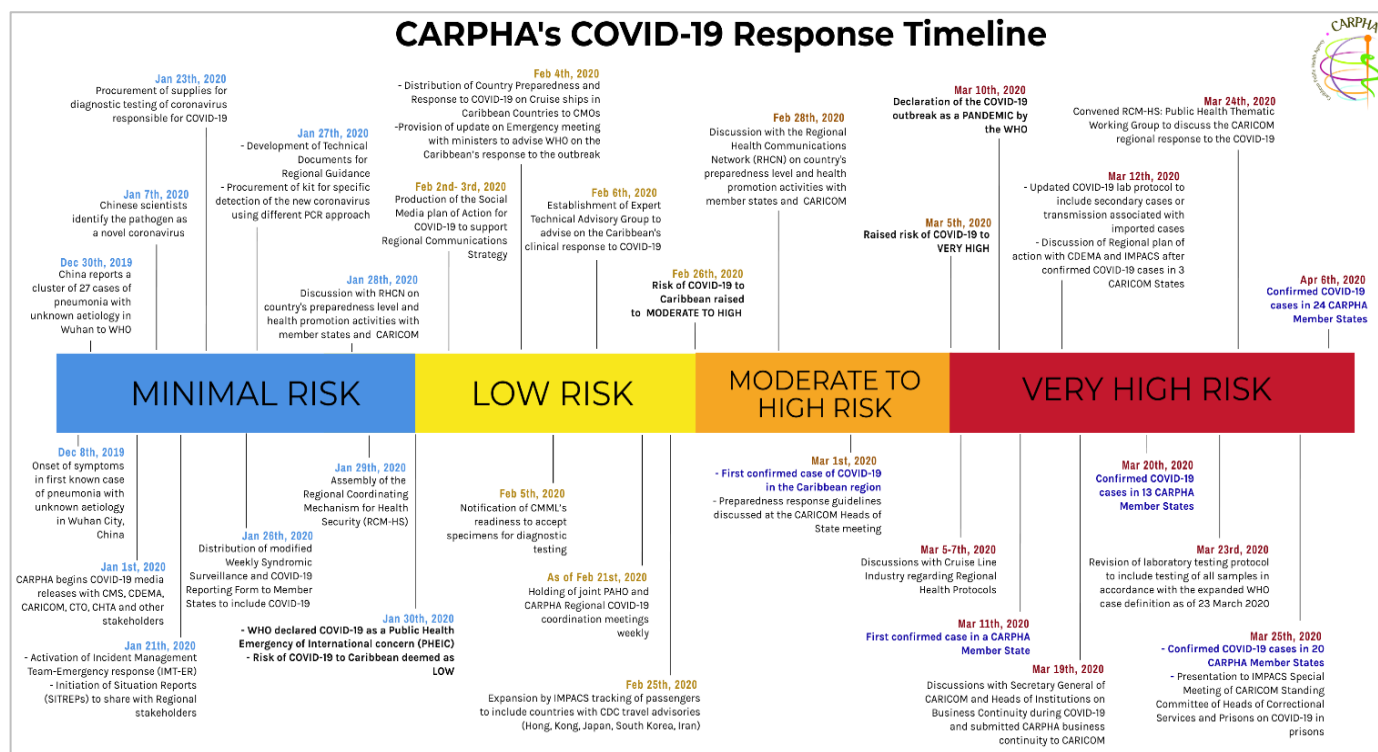
Region	Country/Territory	Cases	# new cases since last report	Deaths	Recovered	% of cases still active [‡]
[‡] Active cases = Total cases – (Number of cases recovered + Number of deaths) ^{***} For full details on all countries' data visit Sources listed below. Numbers are updated throughout the day and may vary from what is listed at time of publishing. Sources: (1) WHO Situation Dashboard Accessed at 8:30am 20 April 2020. Available from: https://who.sprinklr.com/ (2) Johns Hopkins University's Centre for Science and Engineering Accessed at 8:30am. 20 April 2020. Available from: https://gisanddata.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6 https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?useExisting=1&layers=c0b356e20b30490c8b8b4c7bb9554e7c&layerId=1						

N.B. The WHO notes that due to a retrospective data consolidation exercise, some numbers may not reflect the exact difference between the previous numbers reported and the numbers reported today.

Caribbean Regional Coordination

CARPHA is leading the regional health response to COVID-19, in keeping with its Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) mandate from CARICOM and recommendations from the COHSOD-Health Working Group on Regional Coordination for Response Management. As such, CARPHA activated its Incident Management Team-Emergency Response (IMT-ER) on January 21, 2020 and convened the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for Health Security (RCM-HS). Figure 1 depicts a timeline of regional events since the outbreak was detected in December 2019. CARPHA continues to work with its partners and countries, on a harmonized regional response.

Figure 1: CARPHA COVID-19 Response Timeline (December 2019 – April 2020)



Caribbean Public Health Agency's Response

CARPHA's Mission

CARPHA's aim is to work with regional and international health partners to respond to this public health threat and provide timely advice and assistance to Member States and stakeholders.

Governance

CARPHA's Incident Management Team – Emergency Response (IMT-ER) is leading the health response in keeping with CARPHA's mandate from the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA). The IMT-ER produces Situation Reports three times weekly. As of March 31, 2020, CARPHA's IMT-ER meets three times weekly to discuss CARPHA's COVID-19 response and schedules are adjusted and guided by COVID-19 Incident Action Plan.

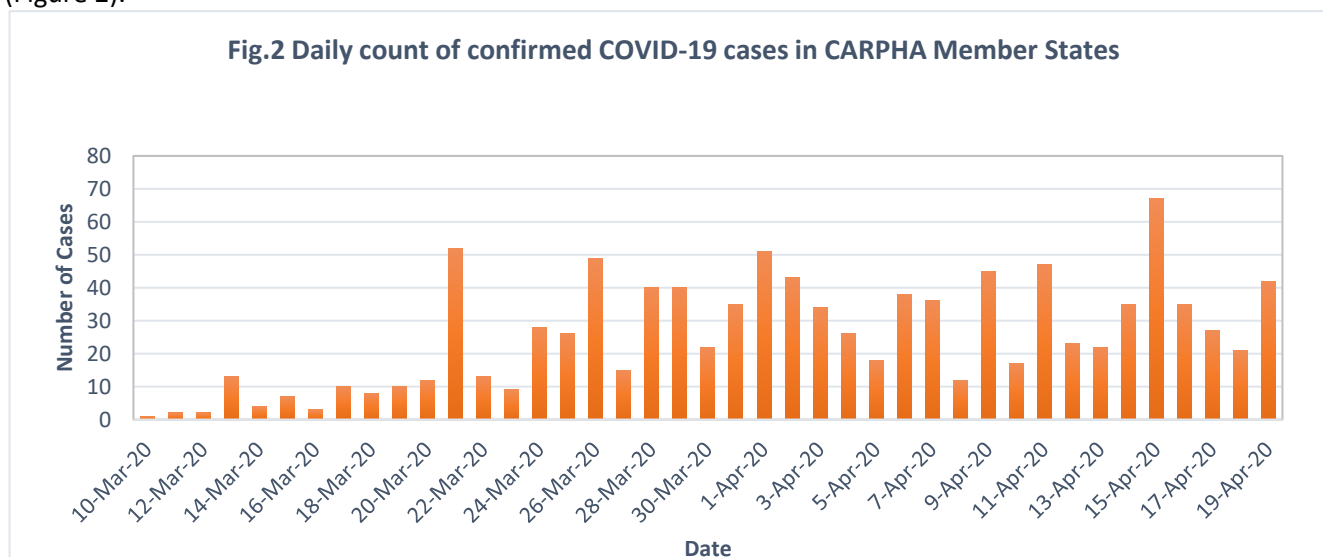
CARPHA's IMT-ER in their meeting on April 9, 2020, provided the following updates:

- CARPHA's Rapid Response Teams have been assembled and a roster is being developed for additional surge capacity for deployment to support Member States.
- CARPHA Workplace Protocol has been updated to reflect the commencement of temperature checks on all three campuses and staff have been provided with PPE.

Disease Surveillance and Epidemiology in CARPHA Member States

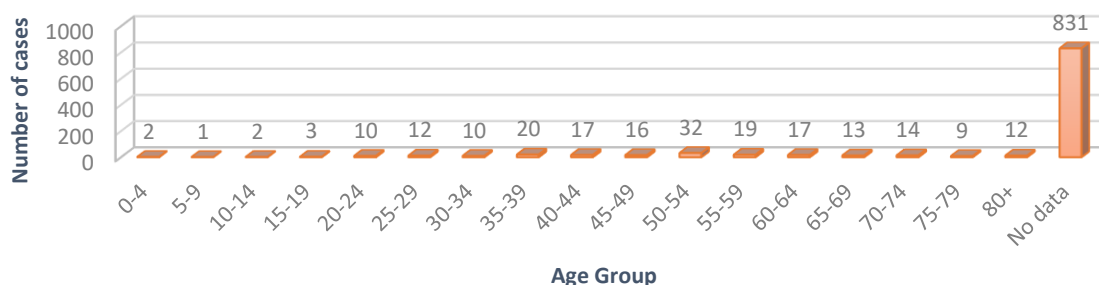
Data submitted officially by Member States to CARPHA Surveillance System, official media releases from Ministry of Health or other official Country sources available in the public domain, have been used to inform the assessment of the current situation in the Caribbean Region.

As of April 20, 2020, there have been 1,040 cases confirmed from CMS, the majority reported on April 15, 2020 (Figure 2).



For the cases for which data was available, the majority were aged 50 years and over. There was no age provided for most cases (Figure 3).

Fig. 3 Reported Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 by age group in CARPHA Member States



Among cases for whom a source of infection was reported, 44% were imported; and 37% appeared to be close contacts (local transmission) of a known imported case (Figure 4).

Fig. 4 Percentage of Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 by Transmission Category in CARPHA Member States

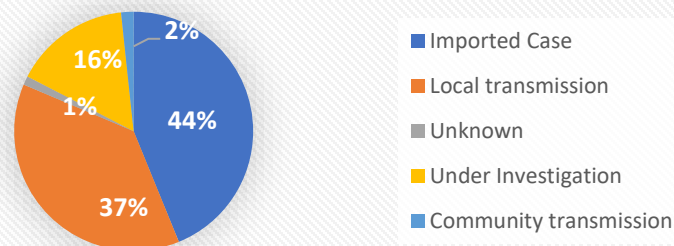
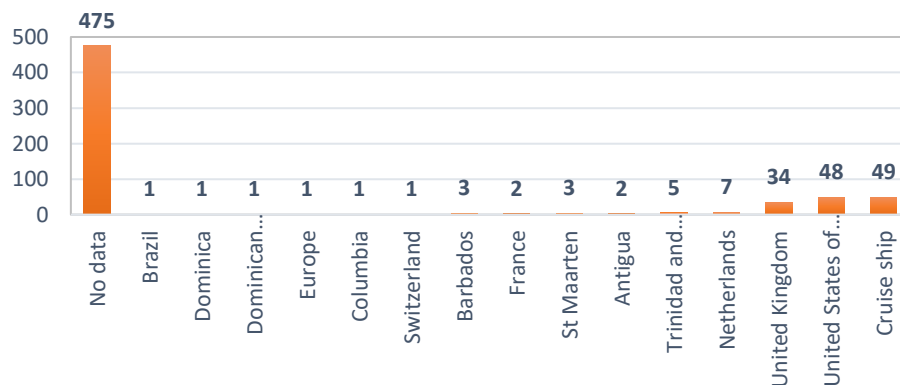
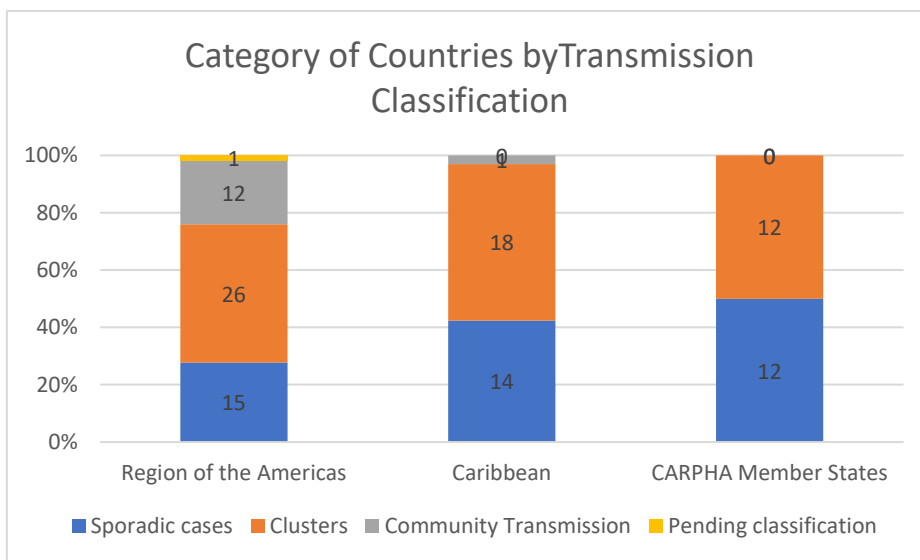


Fig. 5 Reported Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 by Travel History in CARPHA Member States



The source was not identified for the vast majority of imported cases reported. Data available identified cruise ships, the United States of America and the United Kingdom as the top three locations where cases reportedly acquired their illness (Figure 5).



Among the 24 Member States, 50% (12/24) have been classified as having sporadic cases, 50% (12/24) have reported clusters, based on data received by WHO from national authorities by 10:00 C7EST, 19 April 2020.¹(Figure 6)

Sporadic cases: Countries/territories/areas with one or more cases, imported or locally detected.

Clusters of cases: Countries/territories/areas experiencing cases, clustered in time, geographic location and/or by common exposures

Community transmission: Countries/area/territories experiencing larger outbreaks of local transmission defined through an assessment of factors including, but not limited to:

- Large numbers of cases not linkable to transmission chains
- Large numbers of cases from sentinel lab surveillance
- Multiple unrelated clusters in several areas of the country/territory/area

Member State Reporting on COVID-19 line listing and surveillance data

CARPHA has a mandate to carry out surveillance of infectious diseases in the Region. Since the start of the outbreak, few countries have submitted their line listings for COVID-19 cases. Member States are reminded to **send anonymous line listings of confirmed cases of COVID-19 to CARPHA weekly**, by emailing carpha-epidemiology@carpha.org. A summary of COVID-19 surveillance data received from Member States is presented in Table 2⁵.

¹ WHO (2020). Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Report – 90 https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200419-sitrep-90-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=551d47fd_4 accessed 20 April 2020.

Table 2: CARPHA Surveillance received from Member States, as of April 20, 2020

Reporting Source		Airport		Seaport		Overall Total	
		No.	Cum.	No.	Cum.	No.	Cum.
Travellers with exposure or travel history		149	3,762	0	9	149	3,771
Symptomatic travellers seen at Health facilities		0	30	0	0	0	30
Travellers quarantined by public health authority		*	727	*	0	*	727
Travellers self-quarantined at home		*	2,413	*	0	*	2,413
No. of travellers completing 14-day isolation/quarantine		1,539	1,928	0	0	1,539	1,928
No. of travellers tested during the reporting period		84	511	14	26	98	537
Outcome of tests	Positive	42	122	12	16	54	138
	Probable	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Negative	265	642	2	10	267	652

⁹ To date six Member States reported data for EPI-Week 14. * Not reported. No. refers to the number of persons reported in EW-X; Cum. refers to the number of persons to date, i.e. EW 1-X.

- CARPHA has disseminated a Health Sector Response Plan to Member States to guide their national response efforts where necessary. Further copies of the document are available upon request.
- As most Member States have closed their borders to international travel, the numbers of travellers arriving at Points of entry have been reduced significantly. All 24 CMS have reported confirmed cases of COVID-19. CARPHA recommends that Member States be guided by the Health Sector Response Plan for the relevant actions to be taken based on the phase of pandemic response required for their unique scenarios. A copy of the guideline may be requested by email to CARPHA from Member States.
- CARPHA has produced various technical guidelines including algorithms to assist CARPHA Member States (CMS) to triage and manage suspected cases within their borders and in clinical settings. These are summarised at the end of this document and can be accessed from CARPHA website at <http://carpha.org/What-We-Do/Public-Health/Novel-Coronavirus>.

Laboratory

- As of April 20, 2020, CARPHA has received 2261 samples from 14 CMS, 295 (13.61%) of which have tested positive since the start of the outbreak.

- **On April 16**, CARPHA through the Caribbean Public Health Laboratory Network (CariPHLN), hosted a virtual discussion on COVID-19: Considerations for the Medical/Hospital Laboratory for medical laboratory professionals and CariPHLN members. This virtual training package for medical and hospital laboratories was attended by more than 260 participants across the region.
- April 14-15, 2020: CARPHA in association with Ministry of Health, Trinidad and Tobago, UWI and PAHO held a two-days virtual training “An Introduction to Laboratory Diagnosis, Molecular Biology and Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) for the COVID-19 Laboratory Response”.
- **On April 9, CariPHLN Bulletin #2** was distributed which provided updates on COVID-19. This bulletin highlighted the CariPHLN regional response to COVID-19, guidance on GeneXpert SARS-CoV-2 kits and virtual training sessions available for medical and hospital laboratories.
- **Laboratory Updates No. 9 and 10** were circulated to all stakeholders on April 4, 2020. Update 9 included updates to case definitions and update 10 included the testing algorithm. **Revised Requirements for Sampling of Suspected Cases:** Following recent consultations with PAHO/WHO clinical advisors and based on scientific guidance received, CARPHA has increased the time period during which samples can be taken from suspected cases of COVID-19. Samples can be taken **from as early as day 0 to as much as ten (10) days following the onset of symptoms**. Nasopharyngeal and Oropharyngeal swabs (paired) are being accepted for testing at CMML. Neither urine nor serum will be further required.
- The Turnaround time (TAT) of PCR results, a quality indicator of laboratory performance is on average to date 20 h 59 m. This is currently faster than the set TAT for COVID-19 PCR tests (24-48 h).



COVID-19: Considerations for the Medical/Hospital Laboratory



Date: Thursday, 16th April 2020

Time: 11.00 – 13.00 hrs

Audience: Medical Laboratory Professionals, CariPHLN members

Objectives:

To provide current information on newly available diagnostic platforms for detection of SARS-CoV-2 and;

To provide laboratory biosafety and biosecurity guidance for handling and processing various types of patient samples that are suspect or confirmed cases of COVID-19.

To learn from other laboratories in the CariPHLN network that have capacity for the detection of SARS-CoV-2.

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Objectives (Dr. Lisa Indar, Assistant Director, Surveillance Disease Prevention and Control Division, CARPHA)
2. Molecular and Rapid Assays (Dr. Gabriel Gonzalez-Escobar, Director, Laboratory Services and Network, CARPHA)
3. Biosafety and Biosecurity Considerations for handling samples for suspect and confirmed COVID-19 cases (Ms. Sacha Wallace-Sankarsingh, Biorisk Manager, CARPHA)
4. Lessons from the Field: Implementation for COVID-19 diagnostics (Dr. Songee Beckles, Barbados – pre-recorded)
5. Question and Answer Session (All welcome)

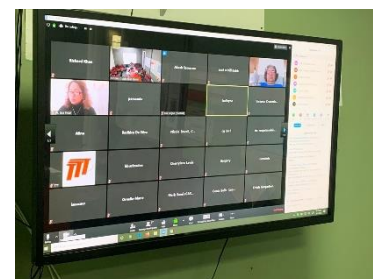
Communication and Information

- Members of CARPHA’s staff attended PAHO’s virtual Media conference held on April 14, 2020.
- April 9, 2020 - Dr. Joy St. John joined the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) to discuss COVID-19: Current Status/Future Trends. The webinar was hosted by the Caribbean Broadcasting Union (CBU).
- April 7, 2020 - Dr. St. John was a guest on the Caribbean Broadcasting Cooperation “*Mornin Barbados*” to discuss the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).



Caribbean Response to Covid 19

- April 5, 2020 - Dr. Joy St. John participated in an online podcast - Joint Yardie Skeptics, Freethinking Island Air Me Now (Jamaica) on COVID-19
- April 4, 2020 – Dr. Joy St. John joined CARICOM and the University of the West Indies in *The Caribbean Response to COVID-19: A conversation with representatives of regional players*. The session was hosted by Ambassador Curtis Ward for CaribNation TV and The Ward Post.
<https://bit.ly/2z1B3PZ>
- CARPHA hosted a virtual regional media briefing on Wednesday April 1, 2020, to discuss CARPHA’s testing for COVID-19 and protocols for dissemination of results. A recording of this briefing can be found at <https://youtu.be/fjVNPgLRxJE>
- CARPHA Communications Unit continues to produce social media products for various audiences and has maintained an active social media presence on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- The latest media release, infographics and other relevant guidelines are available on CARPHA’s website. Available from: <http://carpha.org/What-We-Do/Public-Health/Novel-Coronavirus>.



CARPHA’s virtual media briefing



Logistics and Planning

- CARPHA is expanding its Human Resource skills bank to facilitate, as the need arises, the rapid recruitment and deployment of short-term emergency response consultants to CARPHA and its Member States ([see CARPHA – Call for Experts: COVID-19 Flyer](#)). Interested applicants are invited to submit an expression of interest and CV by email to HRM@CARPHA.ORG along with the completed [Emergency Response Deployment – Skills List document accessible](#) on CARPHA website.



CALL FOR EXPERTS

The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) in its Response to COVID – 19 Wants Your Technical Expertise

As we strengthen our COVID-19 response to serve the Caribbean, we are looking for persons who have:

- ✓ Specialized knowledge and skills in Public Health / Communicable Diseases / Epidemiology / Disease Outbreak Investigations and or Emergency Response.
- ✓ Post – graduate university degree in Public Health / Epidemiology / Field Epidemiology or equivalent training and experience.
- ✓ Experience in Emergency Response Deployment.
- ✓ Previous experience as part of an Incident Management Team / Disease Outbreak Response Team.
- ✓ Experience working in the Caribbean region
- ✓ Competence in using statistical and analytical software & epidemiological databases.
- ✓ Experience in database tools and spreadsheets
- ✓ The ability to work in a multidisciplinary team.
- ✓ The ability to work in a constantly dynamic and fluid environment.

Our Expertise

IF YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES AND YOUR QUALIFICATIONS MATCH THE ABOVE CRITERIA KINDLY SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION TO HRM@CARPHA.ORG

• The Regional Security System (RSS) continues to facilitate transportation of samples from Member States to CARPHA. Samples from Member States and reagents are routinely processed through the Trinidad and Tobago Customs Department without delay. Negotiations are in progress to extend approval for the RSS to continue to deliver samples to Trinidad.

• Several Member States have implemented various measures to limit importation of the disease, including screening at ports of entry. Details can be obtained from the Ministries of Health of each Member State.

Stakeholder Engagement

CARPHA is working closely with various stakeholders for a coordinated regional response, and as such has engaged with stakeholders in multiple ways, including the following:

- April 20, 2020: Dr. St. John attended meeting with USAID on COVID-19.

- April 18, 2020: CARPHA held a coordination meeting with Ministry of Health, Trinidad and Tobago and PAHO.
- April 17, 2020: CARPHA participated in the planning meeting for upcoming COHSOD meeting.

CARPHA continues its ongoing communications and meetings with the Council for Human and Social Development, CARICOM, Chief Medical Officers, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, PAHO regional representatives, private organizations, public associations, regional agencies and organizations to advise on regional health response, guidelines and coordination to COVID-19 for proactive actions for developing situation in the Caribbean. *A full list of CARPHA actions to date are available.*

Way Forward

CARPHA is reminding Member States to **ramp up their disease surveillance efforts for acute respiratory infections/severe acute respiratory infections both at the primary and secondary care levels, as a matter of urgency.** This is to include widening their surveillance focus to be able to detect any cases that have not travelled, which can be an early indication of local transmission.

The WHO Director General has asked that individuals and countries refrain from using therapeutics that have not been demonstrated to be effective in the treatment of COVID-19. Various trials are underway to test drugs for use in treating COVID-19 cases. Discussions are underway in the region to determine participation in the WHO SOLIDARITY trial.

CARPHA is working with technical experts across the Region to provide up-to-date guidance and technical advice to CMS. New guidelines have been prepared for the management of COVID-19 cases on airlines and guidance for Hotel Workers. CARPHA remains committed to providing support and guidance to Member States on how to strengthen their health systems response should there be person-to-person transmission in the Caribbean.

CARPHA continues to work through the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Health Security and the various regional coordination efforts to engage and support Member States, regional and international partners for the health security of the region.

CARPHA recognises there is need for accurate information in this time of uncertainties. CARPHA documents can be accessed as a reliable source of information from our [website](#). Available on the website are **Technical Documents, Media Releases and Communications Material.**

References

- WHO, 2020. Laboratory testing for coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in suspected human cases. Interim guidance. 19 March 2020. Available from: <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/laboratory-testing-for-2019-novel-coronavirus-in-suspected-human-cases-20200117>
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