



CARIBBEAN
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For Immediate Release

Source: Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)

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CARIBBEAN UNVEILS INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT REOPENING TOURISM

Health and Tourism Partnership Addresses COVID-19 Risks to Travelers and Employees

MIAMI (July 4, 2020) – The Caribbean’s health and tourism authorities’ COVID-19 Caribbean Tourism Task Force announced a new initiative to help safeguard the health of travelers and employees during a recent virtual press conference, unveiling comprehensive health safety guidelines supported by an aggressive training schedule aimed at reaching thousands of the region’s tourism employees in the coming weeks and months.

The initial set of guidelines includes detailed checklists backed by health safety training for various tourism industry sectors, including ground transportation, accommodation providers, food and beverage, and attractions. General health safety protocols have also been created and will be supported with training delivered by the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) to a wide cross section of employees and owners in the tourism industry.

Companies in the region which participate in the training will be recognized, and accommodation providers which also join CARPHA’s online Tourism Health Information System (THIS) will be eligible to receive the Caribbean Travel Health Assurance (CTHA) Stamp , adding further assurance to travelers about their commitment to health safety.

Building upon a unique partnership established over five years ago by CARPHA and the region’s public and private sector tourism stakeholders, and recognizing the severe negative impact which COVID-19 could have on the tourism-dependent economies of the region, CARPHA, the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) started working on COVID-19 preventative and education initiatives early in February.



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This led to the formalization of the COVID-19 Caribbean Tourism Task Force a month later between CARPHA, CTO and CHTA, and later joined by the Jamaica-based Global Tourism Resiliency and Crisis Management Centre (GTRCMC) and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States Commission (OECSC).

Not intended to replace specific national and territorial guidelines, or those being put in place by specific hotels and the industry, the procedures serve to reinforce and complement existing policies which have been drawn up to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The initiative has also been put in place to provide support particularly for the independent hotels, tourism-related businesses, and smaller destinations which lack the expertise or resources to develop their own.

The task force undertook a review, which engaged a cross representation of Caribbean tourism stakeholders, of health safety protocols and guidelines for tourism protocols issued by a range of destinations, industry enterprises, and regional agencies and are further synced with global protocols, including those of the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC).

“We started working with this (initiative) in January with the Member States and we have been leading the regional health response in this matter of COVID-19. Public health is our mandate, and in looking at how we can ensure we open up to tourism safely, we had guidance from not only our own technical sources but also the guidance and the wisdom of those in the field,” said Dr. Joy St. John, CARPHA’s Executive Director.

The leadership of both CHTA and CTO expressed their commitment to the engagement of tourism and industry partners in improving and maintaining health and safety standards throughout the region and were thankful for the expertise of the partners in delivering an impressive compilation of protocols.

CHTA CEO Frank Comito and CTO Acting Secretary General Neil Walters expressed that such collaborative partnerships are critical to the sustainability of the tourism sector on which many countries and territories depend for their economic survival.

The task force members agreed that disseminating the guidelines and beginning the essential work of training industry stakeholders while navigating the changing nature of the industry and the global economy were urgent priorities.



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Also joining in the launch were Dr. Didicus Jules, Director General for the OECS; Dr. Lloyd Waller, Executive Director for the GTRCMC; and CHTA President Patricia Affonso-Dass, who each reinforced their support and the importance of the initiative.

For more information on the guidelines and related training sessions, visit www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com.

About the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) is the Caribbean's leading association representing the interests of national hotel and tourism associations. For more than 55 years, CHTA has been the backbone of the Caribbean hospitality industry. Working with some 1,000 hotel and allied members, and 33 National Hotel Associations, CHTA is shaping the Caribbean's future and helping members to grow their businesses. Whether helping to navigate critical issues in sales and marketing, sustainability, legislative issues, emerging technologies, climate change, data and intelligence or, looking for avenues and ideas to better market and manage businesses, CHTA is helping members on issues which matter most.

For further information, visit www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com.

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