



Statement of the Minister of Health and Wellness

Dr. the Hon. Christopher

COVID-19 Update: Press Conference

Thursday, June 11, 2020

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen of the press, members of the public all. Thank you for joining us for this the latest update on COVID-19 in Jamaica.

I am joined today by my colleague ministers Senator the Hon. Kamina Johnson Smith, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade; and the Hon. Edmund Bartlett, Minister of Tourism.

Also joining are us are Permanent Secretary Mr. Dunstan Bryan and Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Jacqueline Bisasor-McKenzie.

CASE NUMBERS

- Jamaica has recorded six new cases of COVID-19 in the last 24 hours. This brings the total number of confirmed cases to 611.
- The new cases were all imported – 4 arriving on a flight from the United States and 2 on a flight from the United Kingdom. Their ages range from 38 to 63 years.
- The new cases are comprised of five (5) females and one (1) male. Two of the cases are from St. Elizabeth, another two from St. James, and one each from Portland and St. Catherine.
- They bring to 110 the number of imported cases. In addition, 219 cases are contacts of confirmed cases; 39 are local transmission cases not epidemiologically linked; 236 are related to a workplace cluster; and 7 are under investigation.



- 354 or 57.9% of the 611 confirmed cases are females and 257 or 42.1% are males. They range in age from 2 months to 87 years.

RECOVERIES

Also in the last 24 hours, the island has had ONE additional recovery, putting our overall recovery numbers at 408 or 66.8%.

Further, there are currently two (2) critically ill cases, and none who are moderately ill.

TESTING

- The island's testing numbers are up to 15,478 – with 325 new samples tested in the last 24 hours.
- Of note is that we also did 105 discharge samples in the last day.
- Of the 15,478 samples tested, in addition to the 611 positives, there are 14,822 negatives and 45 are pending.

138 STUDENT LIVING

The Ministry of Health and Wellness notes the concerns of persons in isolation at the newly commissioned facility here in Kingston.

Even as we look into the particulars of the patients at that facility, I want to remind those in facilities across the island and others quarantined at home of our testing protocol.

- Samples are taken at care sites and transported to the National Public Health Laboratory in Kingston.



- Laboratory operations occur throughout the 24-hour period as part of the COVID-19 response, with testing done in batches.
- At the current volume of samples received and scheduling of staff, results are returned in about 24-36 hrs.

However, this period may be lengthened on occasion for a variety of reasons, including:

- **a delay in the transportation of samples,**
- **samples held as more processing is required or**
- **re-testing is required as aliquot from the sample was compromised or for which an invalid report was generated based on machine issues.**

The point, ladies and gentlemen, is that life happens and delays will occur. However, we work to ensure that delays are the exception and not the rule.

Of note is that most testing is being done for surveillance purposes and results are provided in line listing format. Where the testing is done for diagnostic purposes, results are prepared for issuance to the Attending Clinician and placed into the individual's files.

As soon as the results become available, they are given to the patient verbally. Copies of the results may be obtained on request for medical records, or part thereof using established procedure.

As part of our containment efforts, discharge protocol for those who return an initial positive test dictates that persons return two negative test results before they can be discharged.



We understand the anxiety that can come with waiting for a COVID-19 test result and urge the patience of the persons waiting. At the same time, we are also making available our mental health professionals to provide counselling or other support as required.

CONCLUSION

As we manage COVID-19 in Jamaica, we will encounter challenges. However, together we can overcome and have seen the good results that can come from working together to beat this disease.