

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Remarks**  
**The Hon Kim N. Wilson, JP, MP, Minister of Health**  
**COVID-19 Update**  
**20 April 2021**

Good evening.

The Ministry of Health received 578 test results since the last update, and 12 were positive for coronavirus. This gives a test positivity rate of 2.1%.

One of the new cases is classified as imported by a resident who arrived on American Airlines AA 2044 from Charlotte on 18 April 2021 and tested positive on their arrival test. Three of the new cases are classified as local transmission with known contact as associated with known cases.

The additional eight new cases are classified as under investigation. These cases are among residents with no currently identified link to other known cases or history of travel in the past 14 days.

Additionally, since the last update, there were 23 recoveries and no deaths.

There are currently 893 active cases, of which;

- 858 are under public health monitoring and;
- 35 are in the hospital, with six in critical care.

Since March 2020, Bermuda has recorded 2226 total confirmed cases of COVID-19; out of those, 1313 persons have recovered, and sadly, 20 persons have succumbed to COVID-19.

The seven-day average of our real-time reproduction number is 0.76.

Bermuda's current WHO country status remains "Community Transmission".

Please keep in your prayers those persons currently in the hospital with COVID-19 related illness, as well as the families who have lost a loved one due to coronavirus.

This is still an intense outbreak, and the virus continues to circulate in our community. We are not out of the woods yet. Are we on the right path? I think so. Our number of positive cases is slowly going down, and we see more recoveries. Things seem to be getting a bit better. But hospital admissions are too high, and the number of deaths is troubling — my sincere condolences to those families who have recently lost loved ones.

I will now provide an update on our vaccine programme...

We have completed the fourteenth full week of vaccinations. From January 11 to April 17, 2021, Bermuda has administered a total of 50,992 vaccinations — a figure that rises to 52,337 if you include vaccinations administered on Sunday and Monday as well! — all of which is very good news.

Of the 50,992 vaccinations administered for the period we are reporting on, which ends April 17th;

- 53% are women, and,
- 47% are men.

Significant progress has been made in vaccinating our population and, especially, our most vulnerable.

70% of all residents over the age of 65 years have had at least one vaccination with 61% being fully immunised.

Bermuda's goal of "herd immunity" will be achieved when 70% of the population has been immunised. To date, 46% of the population has been vaccinated (with 1 dose), and 34% of the population has been immunised (with 2 doses).

People have asked for an explanation of 'herd or community immunity' and why it is important. Community immunity happens when enough of persons in our population have protection against an infection that it stops being able to spread – the so-called 'dead end' effect. For COVID-19, scientists estimate the threshold for community immunity is 65% - 70% of the population.

In Bermuda, this means something closer to 80% - 85% of the population that is eligible to be vaccinated because, as you know, the vaccines are not yet approved for youth under the age of 16 years. So, once you remove young people from the calculation, we need a much higher rate of vaccination among those that are left – namely, the people who are 16 years and over.

Yes, this is an ambitious target and that is why the Ministry has focused on, and worked hard to achieve, a high rate of vaccination among our most vulnerable group: people over the age of 65 years. 70% of this age group have had at least one vaccination, and that is excellent news.

In a recent Omnibus survey consisted of telephone interviews with a representative sample of 400 Bermuda residents conducted between March 8th and March 17th, 2021, 8% indicated they will definitely not get the COVID-19 vaccine. This is a decrease when compared with December 2020, when 28% indicated they would not get the vaccine.

I will continue to encourage those not registered to be vaccinated to do your own research using reliable sources and to speak to a doctor.

I know that some of the reluctance to get vaccinated is due to concerns about the side-effects. I cannot speak for everyone's experience, just mine. My arm was sore after the first shot; and that was all. After the second shot, which I had a 9 in the morning, I felt fine throughout the day but woke up that night at about midnight with a very, very bad headache. It felt like the flu. With Tylenol and some rest, I was feeling absolutely fine within 24 hours. There is certainly a sense of relief in knowing that I am protected now.

Yes, getting vaccinated is something we can do for ourselves but, again, we can do it for our family and our community. Immunisation will get us out of this pandemic!

The expansions in the vaccinations programs at the Bermuda College and the Hospital helped us to exceed 5000 doses in one week for the first time! Well done, and thank you to the entire vaccination team. I extend my personal thanks to all those working at the Bermuda College Vaccination Centre, as well as the Bermuda Hospitals Board. Kudos to you, well done!

The vaccine programme has expanded hours and days so that we can move towards community immunity. To push us towards achieving our goal, the Bermuda College is accepting walk-ins this week. Thursday and Friday are 8am to 8pm, Saturday and Sunday are 9am to 3pm. You don't need to register – just show up.

I will now briefly speak to the Public Health (COVID-19 Emergency Powers) (Stay at Home) Regulations 2021. The revisions that went into effect today are necessary to protect our community. They are not designed to make people's lives harder. We understand the economic and emotional strain this is having, but the outbreaks we see occur in closed settings with mixed households, people not following the guidelines, and not adequately

using personal protection equipment (PPE). If we do not follow public health guidelines and safety measures as outlined in the new regulations, our community spread will continue, hospitalisations will increase and sadly, we will see more COVID related deaths.

I will remind you that if you are back at work, do not mix and mingle with your co-workers. Contact tracers have identified your work environment as a major reason for transmission – including driving in the same car or truck to get to a work site. Your colleagues are not part of your personal bubble. Sharing a lunch or break room without adequate protection has also led to outbreaks. In all situations, outside your immediate household, you must wear your mask, keep physical distancing and practice proper hand hygiene at all times. We see these types of workplace transmissions regularly. I cannot overemphasise that the mixing of households has gotten us where we are today.

Before I close, I want to extend my appreciation for the Environmental Health team. They have been carrying out invaluable work trying to manage the Covid-19 pandemic since the start. This has included:

- As part of the overall Port Health Team - Monitoring all travellers arriving in Bermuda at the airport and seaports to ensure compliance with the Quarantine laws and traveller rules
- Carrying out investigations of cases/outbreaks in businesses, workplaces throughout our community
- Providing advice and support to businesses on legislation, guidance and best practice to prevent the spread of the virus

At the same time, they have continued to provide essential services such as Vector Control. So, thank you to that entire team.

As a reminder, each of us has a role to play in stopping the spread of the coronavirus. Follow Public Health guidelines, wear a mask, practice good hand hygiene, maintain physical distance and download the WeHealth Bermuda app. If you haven't already done so, register to get vaccinated – because vaccinations are what is going to get us out of this pandemic.

Thank you.