



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA
Department of Communications

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CONTACT

Aderonke Bademosi Wilson

Director

Phone: (441) 505 1868

Email: abwilson@gov.bm

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

30 March COVID-19 Update from Premier David Burt

Good afternoon.

Today I am joined by his Excellency the Governor, I am joined also by the Minister of Health, the Minister of National Security and the Minister of Education.

For today's media briefing, I will give an update on the latest Covid-19 test results, matters dealing with social distancing measures which have been put in place, a small update on the unemployment benefits, the Governor will give an update on the UK Government through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's efforts to organize an airbridge to try to get students who are stranded in the United Kingdom back to Bermuda.

The Minister of Education will provide details of the programmes that have been put in place to help our students to learn from home.

COVID-19 Test Results

Today, the Government of Bermuda received 30 additional test results from our aggressive programme of COVID testing. Of these 30 test results, there are five more confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 25 of the results were negative.

Three of the confirmed new cases were imported cases and two had close contact with a previously confirmed case.

Of the newly imported cases, they all arrived on British Airways flights.

The British Airways flights on 13 March 2020, the British Airways flight on 15 March, 2020 and the British Airways flight on the 17 March 2020.

Here's what you need to know if you were on one of those British Airways flights:

If you arrived on flight 13 March your self monitoring period ended on 27 March, 2020.

If you arrived on 15 March your self monitoring period ended on 29 March, 2020.

If you arrived on 17 March your self monitoring period ends on 31 March 2020.

If you are feeling fine and have no symptoms, there is nothing for you to do except to remain in your house and continue to observe the self-quarantine guidelines or social distancing guidelines which apply after your self-quarantine is over.

If you have any respiratory symptoms, such as a cough or even a mild fever, please contact your doctor. Explain that you were on one of the afore-mentioned British Airways flights and that you would like medical guidance. Do not go to your doctor's office or the hospital. Please call ahead.

Now that we are at 27, I recognize that there is a heightened sense of anxiety inside the community. Here is what I will continue to say. Number one, it is expected that we would have an increase in numbers. Here is what is key. There is no confirmed local transmission that has taken place at this time. Out of the total amount of cases that we have, numbering 27 cases, we know that 17 of these cases were imported, eight of were close contact with persons who were previously confirmed cases, and there are two that remain under investigation.

I know that that there are questions regarding the two that remain under investigation. The Epidemiology Unit is trying to identify where this transmission may have happened. However, it is important to note that contract tracing has happened for close contacts of those particular persons. Those particular persons who are close contacts of the two people who are under investigation, have all been quarantined and to date none of them have experienced any symptoms.

I think it is important for the public to know that just because the cases are under investigation does not stop the Epidemiology Unit from doing what it is that they are supposed to do, which is to track down cases.

Out of the 27 confirmed cases that we have, ten persons have fully recovered, two remain hospitalized in stable condition, and the other 15 are currently active inside their COVID-19 infection. Most of them are at home with mild symptoms but there are two persons that remain hospitalized.

Unfortunately, due to the anonymity of Public Health reporting I come before you with numbers saying 27 and these particular things. I want all of to keep in mind that though COVID infections

are generally mild, it must be understood that these are person who are our friends and family, they are our co-workers, they are people who have families and though some of them have recovered there are still some of them that are still undergoing the effects of the virus. I want us to keep them and their families in our thoughts and prayers, and I want to let them know that, if you are watching from you home, we are thinking about you. Thank you for making sure that you continue to take the precautions that are necessary to limit any possible spread of this virus. I hope that for those of you in the hospital, your treatment is going well and those of you who are at home, are recovering nicely.

Clarification on curfew requirements

I am pleased to report that everything curfew related went well throughout the night. The streets were clear.

Two persons were stopped when they were seen out walking just after midnight.

There were two on the fly curfew exemptions given. One was an elderly couple; the male is a cancer patient and required KEMH attention and was driven to KEMH by his wife. The second had previously been a hospital patient and needed to return and was being returned by a family member. Both passed through to hospital without incident.

There was a 5:30am Burglary Report at Coconut Rock and the culprits were quickly apprehended and are in custody.

Eight Royal Bermuda Regiment personnel reported for police duties. Five were sent out in area cars and three performed foot patrols in the city.

The curfew will continue for two more nights and it will be assessed to see if whether or not the Cabinet will ask the Governor to extend that curfew for a further period of three more nights.

Government Quarantine facilities

There are currently 27 persons that are currently housed in a Government monitored quarantine facility.

On the issue of self-quarantine. It is important to know that if you are on self-quarantine, you cannot leave your house and feel you can quarantine in another residence. You must stay at home, separate yourself from others in your household, if possible use a separate bathroom and wash your hands often. You cannot let in visitors, share the common areas with members of your household and you should not share your utensils with members of your household.

Being in quarantine does not mean that you have the virus, but it does mean that there is a possibility that you may have been exposed to the virus and the most important thing to do is to monitor your health to make sure that you don't get the symptoms.

If you do get symptoms, self-quarantine reduces the chances to giving the coronavirus to the people you live with. However, it is important to note that even if you have not developed symptoms it does not mean that you are free and clear. Continue to maintain your quarantine, because we have noted that some persons can pass on the infections before they have become symptomatic. If you pass the infection on, that means your entire house may be subject to stricter measures if you manage to develop an infection.

It is important that you maintain your self-quarantine, and after your self-quarantine is up, you must still abide by the social distancing guidelines, because our job is to prevent the spread of this virus.

There has been a question of the nine persons who breached self-quarantine. Upon further follow-up and police checks, all persons were found accounted for, save one. The Ministry of Health is going to be speaking with the Police to advance that particular matter to see that that matter is dealt with appropriately under the law.

There will be additional checks that will take place throughout the week by the Police and the Royal Bermuda Regiment, and we are urging all persons that are under self-quarantine to maintain their self-quarantine to make sure that they protect the country and the people of Bermuda.

Unemployment Benefits

There are 819 completed applications that have been submitted to the Department of Workforce Development.

I must thank everyone who has worked around the clock to create the unemployment benefits system from scratch, tested and modify it to accommodate the needs of the applicant and the various government departments who are responsible for processing the applications and payments.

Please note that once these applications have been submitted, the Workforce Development staff will review each application, including the supporting documentation, to properly vet them so that they can properly approved for payment.

It should be noted that the first round of approved payments will be issue later this week.

For those of you who still need to complete a form, you can visit the website, coronavirus.gov.bm or you can get a hardcopy from the General Post Office.

Airport reopening

The current restriction on commercial aircraft operations is in place for two weeks from 21 March, which takes us to 4 April. However, commercial airlines have generally suspended service to Bermuda for the month of April. The Cabinet will discuss the future status of resuming scheduled commercial airline traffic.

It is too early to say what criteria might be established for a decision on reopening the airport. We are taking into account those person who may be stranded overseas who are looking to return home and we are factoring in all of those in our decision making. Please, however note that we will not open the airport prematurely.

Our healthcare professionals are focused on the immediate fight against COVID-19. We are going to ensure that we take care and control of any possible outbreak in this country first before we consider opening up our borders to commercial traffic. There are still a number of Bermudians who are stuck overseas and as I mentioned earlier, the Governor will give an update on the United Kingdom Government's efforts to work with the Overseas Territories to provide an air bridge.

To be included in the airbridge flight to Bermuda returning students must complete the Returning Bermuda Residents Home form on line: **<https://forms.gov.bm/covid19/return>**

The final item which I will tackle today is the issue of the retail closures. On Sunday, we announce that retail closures would be in effect for seven days and would be reviewed following that seven-day period. That seven-day period expires tomorrow, and the Minister of Health has advised that that period will be extended for a further seven days.

That means that the retail closures that were put in place, for not only retail, personal care and all those closure notices regarding churches, community facilities, bars, dine in restaurants etc., will be extended for a further seven days.

It is important that we continue to track and trace any particular COVID infection that may exist in Bermuda to ensure that we have any outbreak under control before we begin to loosen any restrictions that exist in Bermuda.