



PRESS STATEMENT

The Minister of Health

The Honourable Kim N. Wilson, JP, MP

Wednesday 22nd April 2020, 5.30pm

at Berkley Institute

Good Afternoon,

Today, there were 17 test results received; and one was positive for COVID-19.

Bermuda now has 99 total confirmed positive cases. Their status is as follows:

- there are 55 active cases, of which
- 44 persons are under active public health monitoring, and
- 11 persons are hospitalized;
- a total of 39 have now recovered, and
- the total deceased remains at 5.

The average age of all of our confirmed positive cases is 56 and the age range of all of our positive cases is from 18 to 91 years. The age of persons hospitalized ranges between 57 and 91 years, and the average age is 74.

As the public is aware three confirmed COVID cases were found at Westmeath Residential and Nursing Home. We have been working closely with the Administrator since the first case was identified on 10th April and have now started the process to test all residents and staff.

As was said yesterday, the first case was identified on April 10 and that individual has been in quarantine until today. All close contacts were also quarantined. Guidance was given by the Ministry of Health to the home to quarantine four members of staff who had been in close contact with that individual. All staff were monitoring their temperature daily, wearing a mask throughout their shifts and wearing work uniform during working hours only. Since then, there were two further cases identified on 14 April and 20 April respectively.

I know there are questions about why the entire home was not tested earlier, with the first case identified on 10th April. When it occurred, case criteria was not met given the testing capacity at that time. The second case was unrelated to the first and isolated fully. It is now that we have the capacity to test more extensively that we are doing so.

Further actions taken by the Ministry of Health Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit with respect to providing support to Westmeath included:

- Meeting with the acting Executive Director
- Provided guidance on the strategy to manage the outbreak on receipt of test and other investigation results
- PPE training is being arrange
- Supplies are being provided as needed
- Working with the home with respect to infection, prevention and control practices
- Additional outbreak control and mitigation measures are recommended as below:
 - Keep families, staff and residents informed about the outbreak

- No new resident admissions are allowed until the outbreak is over
- Monitor residents for any new respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath) or fever;
- Quickly identify and isolate any resident with symptoms of acute respiratory illness or fever;
- Report any suspected COVID-19 illness or new respiratory illness/fever in residents or staff to the Ministry of Health
- Discontinue all non-essential activities;
- Discontinue all communal activities/gatherings;
- Where possible, encourage family members to keep in touch with loved ones by phone or video chat or other technologies, as available.

As has been explained previously, testing capacity is complex and Bermuda had been in a challenging position due to the global shortage of supplies. We are relieved that we now have more extensive capacity and are able to ramp up our testing regime.

The Ministry and Bermuda Health Council have been working diligently with all care homes on the island to control the spread of the virus among our most vulnerable.

Having increased our testing capacity this week, we are now undertaking to conduct testing in all rest homes as a matter of priority.

Thank you.