



PRESS STATEMENT

The Minister of Health

The Honourable Kim N. Wilson, JP, MP

Wednesday 13th May 2020, 5.30pm

at Berkley Institute

Good Afternoon,

Between yesterday and today there were 157 test results received by the Ministry of Health.

Unfortunately, we suffered a technical error in yesterday's numbers and reported 153 results when, in fact, there were 127 received by the reporting cut-off time. Since then we received a further 30, for the total of 157. None of today's results were positive for COVID-19.

As such, Bermuda's total confirmed positive cases stands at 121. Their status remains as per yesterday:

- there are 47 active cases, of which

- 40 persons are under active public health monitoring, and
- 7 persons are hospitalized, with
- 2 of these in critical care
- A total of 66 have now recovered, and
- the total deceased is 8.

The average age of all of our confirmed positive cases is 59 and the age range of all of our positive cases is from 18 to 101 years.

The age of persons hospitalized ranges between 68 and 89 years, and the average age is 78.

Now that we have a larger number of cases who are deceased, we can provide collated information about the deaths, as there is less risk of identifying individuals. The average age of all deceased cases is 75 and the age range is 57 to 91 years.

The Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit has also been able to do more analysis of the racial breakdown of COVID-19 in our community. Today I can report that, as we have seen in other

countries, the impact of COVID-19 is, indeed, also worse on black populations here in Bermuda.

Currently, 57% of cases are black, 39% are white and 4% are other or unknown. However, 72% of hospitalized cases are black, and most distressingly, 88% of deceased cases are black.

The causes are not fully understood anywhere but it is generally believed that it is due to underlying health and socioeconomic disparities. There are higher rates of chronic disease among black populations and a greater likelihood of living in smaller dwellings and higher density areas. These factors contribute to the likelihood of COVID-19 spread and its impact.

These statistics are also a stark reminder of why preventive measures are so important. If we don't wear masks, wash our hands and maintain physical distance of 6 feet, we will not fare well as a country.

Nevertheless, since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of people who were hospitalized have recovered and

been released, which I think is excellent news. I want to thank the staff at KEMH for their exceptional care of COVID-19 patients.

For example, there is a covid-19 positive patient in the hospital who last week moved from ICU to a general ward. That patient says the nurses helped him through what he describes as a scary experience. It is the nurses who comforted and encouraged him, and helped him renew his faith that he could make it through. This is a wonderful testament, especially during Nurses Month.

I now want to talk about the importance of Infection Prevention and Control Training. No matter where you work or which industry you work in, the risk of spreading infections in the workplace is ever-present. It is important that everyone knows the risks, how to stay safe, and keep themselves and everyone around them healthy.

General measures to prevent and control the spread of infection are critical in combating COVID-19 and preventing its spread. An understanding and appreciation of the general

principals, as well as the full co-operation and involvement of the entire team, at all levels, is essential to our success.

As an employer it is your duty under the Occupational Safety and Health Act to train your employees in this regard whenever there is a risk to their health and safety, such as that presented by COVID-19. To help employers with this, the Department of Health has created online training which has been posted on coronavirus.gov.bm and covers the fundamentals of infection prevention and control for COVID-19. This 50-minute course is for all employees and management. I encourage all employers to be aware of this training and to share it with their staff where appropriate.

Today I can share with you the estimated real-time reproduction number (R_t) of COVID-19 for Bermuda.

The R_t is different from the basic reproduction number... The basic reproduction number, referred to as R_0 (pronounced R-naught), is the average number of susceptible people infected by each infectious person. The R_0 is a static number, currently

estimated at 2.4 for COVID-19, and is based primarily on the characteristics of the infection.

In contrast, the real-time reproduction number (R_t) depends on additional factors including personal behaviours and interventions made to reduce contact between infected and susceptible people; its value will change over time as all of these factors change.

The current estimation of the real-time reproduction number for Bermuda is 0.47 but this can fluctuate a great deal in a small population like ours.

This is promising as our goal is to have an R at near or below 1.

The real-time R is just one indicator that can be used to understand the impacts of our mitigation measures (or non-pharmaceutical interventions) and the country's overall status. This number will continue to be monitored and factored into decision-making for moving to future phases of our reopening. The Ministry will use the R_t number, as well as public compliance with physical distancing, hospitalizations and other

factors, to make recommendations to Cabinet as to when we can move to Phase 2.

And, finally, I want to end with a request...Please, Bermuda, use care and caution when operating vehicles on the road.

Since the shelter-in-place regulations were relaxed, there is increased traffic on the roads between 6am and 10pm.

Excessive speeding poses a threat to the safety and wellbeing of not only the operators of the vehicles involved but other road users, especially the increased number of individuals using the roads for exercise. It is our responsibility as a good citizen of our country to practice and promote road safety.

During this time of COVID-19 pandemic, we should also be very mindful of the impact that preventable road traffic collisions can have on the capacity of our hospital. Please work with us and exercise care, courtesy and caution as you make your commute.

Thank You.