



PRESS STATEMENT

The Minister of Health

The Honourable Kim N. Wilson, JP, MP

Tuesday 9th September 2020, 5.45pm

at Global House

Good Afternoon,

Between Sunday and today there were 2,140 test results received by the Ministry of Health, and two were positive for COVID-19. Both cases were contacts of known cases – one was a resident and one a visitor.

In a first for Bermuda, one of the positive cases was a child who had been quarantining with their parents, so the result was not unexpected. There is no public health risk as both cases were already quarantined before testing positive.

Bermuda has had 177 total confirmed positive cases. Their status is as follows:

- 159 have recovered, and

- there are 9 active cases, who are
- all under active public health monitoring;
- none are hospitalized or in critical care, and
- the total deceased remains at 9.

The average age of all of our confirmed positive cases is 57 and the age range of all of our positive cases is from 10 to 101 years.

The source of all local cases is as follows:

- 66 are Imported
- 90 are Local transmission, with known contact
- 19 are Local transmission with an unknown contact, and
- 2 are under investigation

Bermuda's country status remains "Sporadic Cases". The seven-day average of our real time reproduction number is less than 1.

You will recall that as the country was reopening, we established "Reopening Indicators" that we publish on our website and update regularly. I have to highlight to the public

that our performance on these indicators has deteriorated since reopening. In particular, we have been consistently in the “red” for mask-wearing and physical distancing, as reported by the public through HealthIQ.

As schools reopen, we are seeing some better behaviours return to our day to day lives, and I implore you to both follow the physical distancing guidance and report on HealthIQ. Daily reports have declined and we need this important tool to make sure COVID transmission is prevented.

I would now like to issue a reminder to travellers – as of midnight tonight, we will launch an approval process for the Travel Authorization applications.

Travel Authorizations will need to be purchased between 1 to 3 days before travel. This is to allow every single pre-departure test submitted to be reviewed and approved as part of each application. This measure was made necessary because there were instances of positive cases where invalid pre-departure tests were uploaded. The new vetting process will prevent future cases like this.

A valid pre-departure test result must meet the following standards:

- Display travellers' full name and date of birth
- Date of Test must be within 7 days of departure
- Test result must be negative
- Test type must be a PCR test
- Test must be performed by an accredited laboratory
- Display full name of laboratory and contact information for laboratory

If a traveller's pre-departure test result is valid, they will be issued a Travel Authorization.

Visitors who do not submit a valid pre-departure test result will be notified that their test is not valid and will be given the opportunity to submit a valid result. The response will be customized to tell you the reason for rejection (for example, if your result did not show your full name). It gives you the opportunity to correct it or you can contact the COVID-19 Helpline for further advice.

If a visitor cannot submit a valid test result, they will be denied a Travel Authorization and will not be able to travel to Bermuda.

Residents who cannot provide a valid pre-departure test will still automatically be issued a Travel Authorization but will quarantine until they have a negative Day-8 test result or, if they decline all testing, until they have negative Day-14 test.

Travel Authorizations will be vetted between 9am and 8pm. Any traveller needing an emergency Travel Authorization issued the day of travel must contact the COVID Helpline.

Before I close, I want to clarify a point regarding voting by quarantined persons. There is no system for voting online if you are quarantined. People can, however, register online to for advance voting whereby a presiding officer will attend your home so you can vote in person.

And, finally, with schools reopening this month, I wanted to reinforce the restrictions and guidance around children returning to school following travel.

To be clear, school age children who travel abroad and return home should, ideally, remain at home for 14 days; participating in mobile quarantining and remote learning. However, it is acceptable (but not preferred) for children to return to school following their parent's Day 8 negative test result.

These guidelines are exactly the same for children who have a household member returning from travel or an overseas visitor staying in their household.

Finally, There have been questions raised recently regarding the medically preferred and accurate method for conducting a temperature check - specifically whether it should be taken on the wrist or on the forehead.

Our advice is to follow the manufacturers' instructions regarding optimal use for that specific device. This will prevent a false reading. I want to reassure members of the public that there is no science at all behind false claims currently circulating online that temperature checks performed on the forehead using infrared thermometers interfere with the pineal

gland (the part of your brain that regulates sleep). That video is not accurate and parents should disregard it.

Stay safe, Bermuda, and thank You.