

REMARKS

Minister of Health

The Hon Kim N. Wilson, JP, MP

Coronavirus Media Briefing Update

October 13 2021

Good afternoon.

I open my remarks today by extending heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of those mourning the loss of a loved one to circumstances related to the coronavirus.

Things are getting better, and we are making progress. We have fewer active cases, the hospital is less overwhelmed, and children are returning to in-school learning.

Though we see our situation improving, we still have a ways to go, and everyone must continue doing their part to stop the spread of this aggressive Delta variant so that we can end this outbreak. We must not be complacent. We must not let our guard down, and we must continue to do everything we can to avoid getting infected with COVID-19.

We have completed week 39 of vaccinations since January 11, and Bermuda has administered a total of 88,417 vaccinations.

Of the 88,417 vaccinations given as of October 9:

- 52% are women and,
- 48% are men

85.2% of all residents over 65 years have had at least one vaccination, and 83.0% are fully immunised.

To date, 69.6% of the population has been vaccinated (1 dose), and 67.1% of the population has been immunised (2 doses).

From January 11, 2021, when Bermuda's vaccine campaign began, to Epi Week 40 ending October 9, 2021, Bermuda's Covid-19 hospitalisations and deaths of vaccinated and unvaccinated persons are as follows:

292 hospitalisations [including repeat admissions] of which:

- 260 or 89% were persons who were not fully vaccinated, and,
- 32 or 11% were fully vaccinated.

To October 9, Bermuda has also sadly had 79 deaths, of which:

- 66 or 84% were not fully vaccinated

- 13 or 16% were fully vaccinated

As I have repeatedly said, the COVID-19 vaccine is our best defence in preventing the spread of this virus. The vaccine will decrease symptoms and severe illness and, in most cases, prevent death.

I encourage anyone who has decided to get vaccinated to book an appointment or walk into the KEMH Vaccination Clinic on Tuesday and Thursday, 4 to 8 pm, and Saturday, 8 am to 8 pm. Medical doctors will be there to answer any questions about COVID-19 and the vaccines. To request an appointment, click “COVID-19 Vaccine Registration”, on www.gov.bm or contact the vaccine call centre at 444-2498 option #2.

Bermuda’s COVID-19 vaccine booster programme was launched last Saturday, October 9, servicing local rest homes and on Sunday, October 10, at KEMH for immunosuppressed persons. KEMH will also service the immunosuppressed today from 8 am-8 pm.

If you have one of the following conditions, you are considered immunosuppressed:

- Blood cancers
- Advanced HIV/AIDS
- Recipients of organ transplants
- Treatment for cancers
- Recipients of stem cell transplants
- People born with conditions that depress their immunity like Sickle Cell Disease, Down Syndrome
- Treatment with drugs that depress immunity, for example, high dose steroids, cancer drugs, and drugs for advanced arthritis

Starting today, October 13, a second vaccination centre was launched at the National Sports Centre to accelerate the booster programme.

The dates and hours of operation for the next three weeks are:

- Wednesday, October 13 to Friday, October 15 12pm -6:30pm
- Tuesday, October 19 to Friday, October 22 12pm -6:30pm
- Monday, October 25 to Friday, October 29 12pm -6:30pm

Those 65 and over as well as pregnant women who have had their second dose at least six months prior, are eligible to make their own appointments. To book your own booster appointment, please visit <https://www.gov.bm/vaccine-booster> or click the link at the top of gov.bm that says “Book a Booster Vaccine Appointment”.

If you do not have access to the internet or need assistance in making appointments as you were unable to self-register, please call the Vaccine Centre on 444-2498-option #2.

You can also call your doctor for assistance. Your doctor has a duty to get you the help you need and will gladly assist.

The newly established antigen policy, which allows the importation of antigen tests for personal and commercial use, has had quite a bit of interest which is a positive step in the right direction. This interest means that the public at large is willing partners in assisting in the detecting of COVID-19, which ultimately assist in keeping us all safe.

I will remind the public the purchases of Antigen Test must be

in accordance with the list published by the Bermuda Health Council for both personal and commercial purchases. The list is generated with the combined FDA, and MHRA approved antigen testing. Analysis is currently taking place to determine if additional antigen tests under the remit of authorities in other jurisdictions will be added to the list.

All of the public health measures have been extended for a further two weeks until the 29th October, and this includes curfew.

As we are aware, the US has implemented a new policy that will not allow visitors to enter the US if not vaccinated.

There have been no developments on how those that require medical care in the US will be treated. Therefore, I encourage those who are not vaccinated to start to consider their options if the US determines that exemptions will not apply for unvaccinated person with medical needs.

Finally, Schools will be on mid-term break October 25 to 29th. and I want to advise the public that only camps held entirely outdoors can operate during the mid-term break due to Bermuda's Country Status continuing to be Community Transmission.

No indoor camps can be offered during this school break. All outdoor camps must be registered and approved to operate, per the Camp Guidance at www.gov.bm/camp-guidance. Parents should only register their children at registered and approved camps. Unregistered and unapproved camps are unlawful and will be shut down.

Please remember, we must all do our part to help stop the spread of the coronavirus. Continue to follow public health guidelines, wear a mask, practice good hand hygiene, maintain physical distance and download the WeHealth Bermuda app.