



COVID-19 Presser: 16 March 2020

**Statement of the Minister of Health & Wellness
Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton
Banquet Hall, Jamaica House, Kingston, Jamaica
Monday, March 16, 2020 at 5:15 PM**

Ladies and gentlemen of the press,
Colleagues from the Ministry of Health and Wellness,
Stakeholders all,
Good afternoon.

Thank you for joining us for this our latest update on Jamaica's National Response Efforts with respect of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

CLARIFICATION

In the last 24 hours, there has been a number of queries re patient zero. We want to start there today with a clarification on this point.

- a) 'Patient Zero' refers to the first person who is thought to have introduced a disease into a population.
- b) In Jamaica and with respect of COVID-19, there have been multiple independent points of introduction of the virus into the population.
- c) To avoid confusion we are numbering the cases in order of detection or symptom onset.



d) The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Jamaica is therefore being referred to as Patient 1.

STATUS REPORT

- 340 persons have come into the island from a country of interest since January 31.
- There are now 12 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Jamaica.
- 26 persons are in quarantine in a Government facility.
- 43 are in home quarantine. Note that these home quarantine numbers do not include the residents of 7 & 8 Miles Bull Bay.
- 23 persons are in isolation in Government facilities.

BULL BAY QUARANTINE

- 7 and 8 Miles Bull Bay, St. Andrew remain under quarantine.
- Up to yesterday, a team from the KSA Parish Health Department had visited 269 households and interviewed some 642 persons.
- 1 person showed symptoms and was transferred to isolation.
- Residents with prescriptions will, for the period of the quarantine, have those filled by the National Health Fund's Mobile Pharmacy. Residents



are asked to give their prescriptions to visiting health teams to make that happen.

NEW MOVES

1. All travelers from countries where there is local transmission of COVID-19 will now be required to self-quarantine for up to 14 days.
 - Persons, once landed, will be required to receive the necessary information at the airport.
 - They will then be required to proceed to their place of abode and remain in self-quarantine for 14 days.
 - Persons in Hotels will also be required to observe the quarantine rules as outlined by the Ministry of Health and Wellness.
 - Persons will be able to leave the island at their scheduled departure date even if it is before the 14-day period of quarantine, if they do not become ill and do not meet the case definition. However, if they develop symptoms, they would be isolated.
2. If during the period of quarantine, persons develop symptoms, they are to contact the Ministry at the COVID-19 lines and await instructions: **888-754-7792** or at **888-ONE-LOVE (663-5683)**. Additional numbers to call are **876-542-5998, 876-542-6007** and **876-542-6006**. Be advised that these numbers are



- experiencing heavy call volumes but the Ministry will get to your call as soon as possible.
3. Jamaicans who develop flu-like symptoms who may have had contact with someone who has travelled to a country affected by COVID-19 are to contact the Ministry of Health and Wellness for advice.
 4. Effective this **Wednesday, March 18 (2020)** all public operations will be closed for seven (7) days.
 - Government workers – with the exception of those in the essential services – will have their duties limited to the workplace while working from home is encouraged. The details are to be settled with permanent secretaries and heads of agencies.
 - Bars, night clubs, churches and restaurants (except for takeout) are to be closed.
 - Public gatherings (such as funerals and weddings) are limited to no more than 20 persons.
 - Public transport service is limited to seated passengers only and taxis are required to transport one less passenger.
 - Private businesses are advised to minimise public engagement and are encouraged to have staff work from home.
 5. Outpatient clinics in hospitals are to be scaled down.



6. Hospital visits are now reduced to once per day and to one visitor per patient.
7. A contract has also been awarded to Jiangxi Jinhuan Medical Devices Limited – China for an amount of US\$2,217,884.00M for the procurement of 400,000 N95 Masks for the COVID-19 response.

STAYING SAFE

Members of the public are therefore reminded to:

- ✓ STAY HOME if you are ill and having fever and/or respiratory symptoms.
- ✓ Maintain a distance of at least one metre from persons who are coughing or sneezing.
- ✓ Frequently perform hand hygiene by washing hands thoroughly with soap and water or using a hand sanitizer if hands are not visibly soiled.
- ✓ Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and then discarding it.
- ✓ And resist the habit to touch your face.

Further, public gatherings and non-essential travel are discouraged.

In addition to the numbers provided, information and updates on COVID-19 can be found at the Ministry's website at <https://www.moh.gov.jm> and social media platforms [@themohgovjm](https://twitter.com/themohgovjm). Members of the public may also email covid19@moh.gov.jm or jacovid19facts@gmail.com for information.



I want to also remind the public that the success of our efforts is dependent on their support. We, therefore, urge the public to act in accordance with the advisories from the Ministry of Health and Wellness and to cooperate with our health care professionals working in communities and in facilities at this time.

###