

HEALTH HERALD

Weekly Newsletter of the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

200 Strong!

COVID-19 recoveries up 79 in the last week

The Ministry of Health and Wellness ended another week on a positive note, as the island hit the 200 mark for COVID-19 recoveries. Recoveries are now up to 36%.

Also last week (May 17 - 23), the island recorded a total of 550 COVID-19 cases, with the six latest additions on Saturday.

Five of the six (6) new cases are from among the repatriated Jamaicans – one (1) arriving from the United Kingdom on May 6 and four (4) via cruise ship at the Falmouth Pier on May 19. The sixth case is under investigation from Kingston & St. Andrew.

"COVID-19 recoveries up to 36% as confirmed positive cases reach 550"

There are now:

- 211 cases that are contacts of confirmed cases;
- 17 that are under investigation;
- 62 that are imported cases;
- 234 cases that have been linked to a workplace cluster; and
- 26 that are local transmission cases not epidemiologically linked.

Testing numbers, meanwhile, stood at 9,923 samples. Of that number, 9341 were negative while 32 samples were pending.

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FROM THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
WELLNESS.**

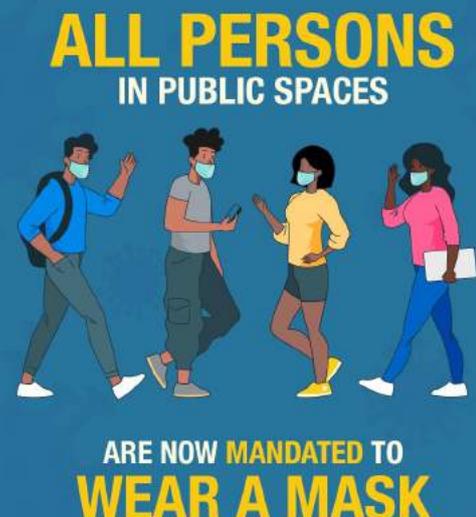
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Wonder Woman J.B.M.



Join us in celebrating our very own 'wonder woman', Chief Medical Officer Dr. Jacqueline Bisasor-McKenzie, whose leadership and technical capabilities have been on show for Jamaica to see, as the island navigates COVID-19 waters. Read the full story of the CMO's journey up to now in the May 18 issue of the Jamaica Observer's *All Women* publication.

Access story here: http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/all-woman/dr-jacquiline-bisasor-mckenzie-the-woman-in-control_194185

Outfitted



Minister of Health and Wellness Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton enjoys a light moment with representatives from EnviroPlanners Limited during a recent handover of coveralls at the head office in Kingston.



Excerpts from the 73rd World Health Assembly

On behalf of the Government and people of Jamaica, I congratulate the World Health Organization for the leadership that it has provided in this global public health crisis - COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the guidance of the World Health Organization, Jamaica's early response to the COVID-19 epidemic and our proactive approach to preventing, detecting, containing and responding have resulted in significant slowing down of the disease in country. We have in fact up to this point, flattened our curve. The strengthening of Jamaica's core capacities under the International Health Regulations 2005 has been the background against which the country has responded.

Jamaica's response was grounded in the five strategies of our COVID-19 Plan. These are: Planning; Coordination; Situation Assessment and Monitoring; Prevention and Containment; Health System Response and Communication.

Our success so far has centered round an early education programme, enhanced surveillance, early institution of restrictions, early response to perceived threats, and rapid containment exercises. The resulting increased public awareness and early detection of cases, and, our primary health care establishment enabled our ability to mobilize our response teams into communities for case investigation and contact tracing.

"The slowing down has also allowed time for the building of additional capacity in the health sector"

We can say that it is our early implementation of these measures from the detection of our first imported case that have had positive results. As a country we have had to take drastic decisions to shut down sections of the island in order to conduct investigations and to contain this disease.

At the same time Jamaica moved early to establish quarantine facilities and isolation facilities and to build capacity within our hospitals to respond to severe cases. So far, Jamaica has kept the number of cases below the capacity of the health system to respond.

The slowing down has also allowed time for the building of additional capacity in the health sector. COVID wards have been established and health care workers have been sensitized to the necessary Infection Prevention and Control measures. We have increased the capacity for High Dependency and mechanical ventilator support and care as well as improved our inventory management of personal protective equipment.

There has been significant strengthening of the Laboratory and increase in the capacity to collect samples throughout the parishes. We want to thank the Pan American Health Organization and the WHO for the assistance that it has provided and continues to provide to Jamaica in this area.

It is still early in the picture of the global epidemic to detail all the characteristics of the disease. The acquisition of immunity whether through vaccine or through exposure of the population is a main consideration when contemplating the lifting of restrictions that will result in increased numbers of persons becoming infected with the virus. There are several uncertainties around development of either.

The health system, therefore has to have the ability to sustain the present measures and further to increase its capacity to manage more cases while continuing routine and emergency care for the NON COVID 19 health needs of the population.

The Ministry of Health and Wellness is therefore finalizing our plan for Living with COVID19. This plan will focus on the attainment of the IHR targets, especially those that are in relation to responding to hazards of an infectious nature. We have already looked at the expansion of our community health worker programme and other workers in both primary and secondary care, processes for controlled re-entry of Jamaicans, and we continue to look at enhanced measures at our points of entry, utilization of technology to improve service delivery and data capture and analysis, laboratory strengthening, as well as the development of policies that will guide the business and tourism sectors.

In conclusion, as we move forward, I would like to recognize and thank the hard working health care workers of Jamaica and indeed of the entire world for the tremendous work that they have been doing in managing this epidemic.

NEXT WEEK ...

