



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

COVID-9 update Wilson - 28 May 2020

Thursday, May 28th, 2020



Good Afternoon,

Today 115 test results were received by the Ministry of Health; and 1 was positive for COVID-19.

Bermuda has 140 total confirmed positive cases. Their status is as follows:

- there are 39 active cases, of which
- 30 persons are under active public health monitoring, and
- 9 persons are hospitalized; of which
- 2 are in critical care;
- a total of 92 have now recovered, and
- the total deceased remains 9.

The average age of all of our confirmed positive cases is 61 and the age range of all of our positive cases is from 18 to 101 years.

The average age of persons hospitalized is 76 and their age ranges from 66 to 91 years.

The average age of all deceased cases is 74 and the age range is 57 to 91 years.

The source of all local cases is as follows:

- 41 are Imported
- 83 are Local transmission, with known contact
- 10 are Local transmission with an unknown contact, and
- 6 are under investigation

Bermuda's country status remains "Local Transmission – Cluster of Cases"; and our real-time reproduction number is 0.83.

While our transmission rate is very good right now, I want to remind the public that shielding seniors and persons who are clinically vulnerable remains extremely important. Some of the recent new cases we have seen were due to insufficient shielding, indicating that everyone may not understand fully the principles of shielding.

An individual who is more susceptible to COVID-19 complications must be shielded not just from the public but also from household members who go out into the public. For instance, a family member who is the caregiver of a vulnerable person must take strict precautions when providing hands-on care to the shielded person IF they themselves go out to do the shopping, errands and even casual socializing with others outside the household.

Shielding means protecting the medically vulnerable from ANYONE who has outside-the-home contact with others. So if you are taking care of someone who is shielded, or simply wishing to visit or help them, remember that YOU are the risk. So take care to wear and mask and stay 6 feet apart where possible. And if you must do hands-on care, review the guidance for care-givers outlining the precautions you must take.

I'm extremely pleased to see that HealthIQ is being used by more and more people. Adoption of new technologies is going to be vital to our phased reopening, so I encourage everyone with a mobile device to download HealthIQ and update your status regularly.

The "heat map" provided by HealthIQ will give you a good sense of geographical areas where there may be a higher concentration of cases, indicating that you MUST wear your mask and practice distancing and hand hygiene more rigorously.

These actions will feed into our reopening indicators, so it is extremely important for as many people as possible to give their status through this App. Visit healtiq.bm to download the App.

As we enter a holiday week-end I want to remind the public that preventive measures helped get us to Phase 2, and without them we will not progress to phase 3.

Restaurants have been asked to collect names and contact details of their patrons, and I understand some have faced resistance from the public. However, we do need everyone to cooperate. This is a vital public health requirement.

Patrons' contact information is being requested so that contact tracing can take place rapidly if a positive COVID-19 case is identified. Without the contact details, our contact tracing team would be unable to reach other persons who might have been exposed as they were dining at the same time, at a nearby table.

We are amending the guidance so that only one person from each table needs to give their contact details. This will suffice for contact tracers in the event of an outbreak and should reduce the amount of information to be collected.

As of May 21, retail stores which had previously operated under curbside and delivery-only service were able to open their doors to in-store customers...but only under certain conditions. These conditions are detailed in the Phase 2 Retail Directives published on the Government website coronavirus.gov.bm; some of which I will share with you now....

For in-store shopping, staff and customers must wear masks at all times and physical distancing of at least 6 feet must be maintained during any queuing. Additionally, customers must use hand sanitizers provided before entering the store.

The Regulations have been amended so retail customers will be able to visit any day, not by allotted shopping days. The same will apply to pet stores and gas stations.

The shopping days organized by alphabetical surname will remain only for grocery stores, as follows: A-F Monday and Thursday; G-Q Tuesday and Friday and R-Z Wednesday-Saturday. Sundays will be for seniors and shielded persons up to 1pm; and from 1pm the amended Regulations will allow persons over 55 years and essential workers to shop. Seniors and essential workers may shop any day of the week.

As a customer, you should notice many physical changes in the retail stores that you visit – such as floor markings and barriers, as well as increased signage reminding you to follow the physical distancing requirements, hand hygiene and the need to wear masks. Additionally, there should be accessible and visible sanitizing products for customers and staff, with hand sanitizers placed at each entrance of the store.

Only one person will be allowed to use the restroom facilities at any given time and all surfaces will be regularly sanitized.

Where possible, stores should continue to provide online ordering, delivery or curb side pick up to reduce the need for customers to enter the store.

Businesses are required to monitor the health of their staff. Managers should look out for any staff members showing symptoms of COVID-19 and any employee showing symptoms should not be allowed to work. Managers will also have the right to refuse entry to customers who show other signs of illness such as coughing or sweating, at their discretion.

We encourage all front line workers in personal care services and retail to get tested. The drive through at Southside currently has openings for Saturday and Sunday, so register online.

I should highlight at this point that the web site has been revamped to ensure the vast amounts of information being published daily can be found more easily. If you haven't been on the site recently, I invite you to go on coronavirus.gov.bm and browse the guidance documents, such as the one for restaurants and retail, as well as other information available.

Before I close today, I want to remind people about the Argus Telenurse hotline and GP Telehealth consultation service – a vital resource for uninsured and HIP clients.

When an individual calls the COVID-19 hotline feeling unwell with symptoms that are unrelated to COVID-19, and they are uninsured or have the Government's HIP health insurance policy, they will be transferred to Argus' contracted Telenurse vendor – FoneMed. The Telenurse will provide advice and, if the individual needs to consult a GP, the calls will be transferred to Argus to set up a Telehealth consultation with a GP in Bermuda. The COVID-19 hotline number is 444.2498.

Telenurse advice will improve access to healthcare and minimize unnecessary use of hospital emergency rooms and other medical services.

Finally, I want to reiterate the message of caution during the holiday weekend. Please remember that we are in Phase 2 with an "amber light" to proceed with caution. This is not a green light to party – even during a holiday week-end.

Most people are truly making a fantastic effort and following the rules. But it only needs a few careless people to cause an outbreak. If you see any infractions of groups over 10 congregating, not maintaining physical distancing, etc. please call 211 to report it. I know persons like to take pictures and/or send them to their MP, but the surest way to get an infraction acted upon is to report it to the authorities by dialling 211.

In closing, I want to wish you all an enjoyable – but safe – holiday weekend. Wear your mask at all times, practice physical distancing, wash your hands regularly and keep your social bubbles limited. The better we behave now and follow the rules, the greater the likelihood of a more 'normal' summer ahead.

Thank You.

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