



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

Minister Wilson - Update 27 April

Monday, April 27th, 2020



Good Afternoon,

Today there were 388 test results received by the Ministry of Health; and 1 was positive for COVID-19.

Also, as confirmed by the Premier yesterday, and in my press release today, Bermuda has, regrettably, experienced another COVID-19-related death at the weekend. This now takes the total number of COVID-19 deaths to six.

On behalf of my entire team at the Ministry of Health, I want to extend my sincere condolences to the family and friends of this individual. We know you must be hurting deeply right now; and Bermuda grieves with you.

Bermuda now has 110 total confirmed positive cases. Their status is as follows:

- there are 60 active cases, of which
- 47 persons are under active public health monitoring, and

- 13 persons are hospitalized;
- a total of 44 have now recovered, and
- the total deceased is now 6.

The average age of all of our confirmed positive cases is 59 and the age range of all of our positive cases is from 18 to 95 years. The age of persons hospitalized ranges between 57 and 89 years, and the average age is 75.

I can announce today that the Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit has begun collecting race data, and I can report preliminarily that 52% of cases have been Black, 39% were White and 9% were unknown. This reflects Bermuda's demographics.

The Ministry reminds the public that in compiling and reporting this statistic, we must bear in mind that race is a question that should be asked of individuals and not assumed. Persons also have the right to refuse to answer the question.

We also must do our best to preserve privacy and confidentiality of persons diagnosed with coronavirus and therefore there must be enough aggregate information (i.e. a large number of cases) in order to provide information in a way that would not lead to an inadvertent identification of any individual.

On Saturday I issued a statement regarding Westmeath Residential and Nursing Home and I hope it managed to address many of the questions and concerns the community had regarding the timelines for testing at the care home.

One point which perhaps I didn't make clear was that at the time of the first case, on April 10, we simply did not have enough testing swabs & VTM to be able to test all the residents and staff at Westmeath. Public health action took place immediately and the case was successfully isolated protecting other persons at the home – indeed, the subsequent cases found were unrelated to the first case. We had to choose between testing symptomatic individuals elsewhere and asymptomatic individuals at Westmeath.

Going forward, I can say this: Now that we have increased testing capacity; we are actively testing all staff and residents in all rest homes.

I can confirm that we have tested four care homes so far, starting with the homes where there had been cases. All residents have been tested and staff continue to be tested. There have been no additional residents found positive.

We continue our wider roll-out of testing to all care homes.

The issue of 'Which homes we test first' is a risk-based decision, based on fact...and is in no way random. We look at risk factors to guide these decisions – e.g. homes where a large proportion of staff worked in other places, or any homes with an epidemiological link to a case. This takes a careful exploration through contact tracing.

Whether testing occurs in a home or not – the action which is taken is the same whenever we have a case...the wearing of PPE, physical distancing, contact tracing and the isolating of ill individuals. Without implementing those steps, testing has limited use.

We also continue to test essential workers – we have performed approximately 229 tests to date for essential workers.

I want to also address the damaging allegations being circulated regarding the Government's new laboratory and Dr. Carika Weldon. As I said previously, these unfounded claims of illegal or illegitimate testing are irresponsible and entirely false. They damage public confidence at a time that unity is paramount, and they risk causing wholly unjustified reputational damage to highly trained professionals trying to focus on fighting COVID-19. All testing done by the Government is utilizing valid real time PCR equipment that is FDA approved, and we will accept nothing less. They are being reported to our physicians, to the public, and to our international partners. The Government stands by the results of these tests and we're pleased to have additional testing capacity.

In closing, I would like to remind the public that hospital beds are still needed by the country; they are needed by the people who fall seriously ill and need hospital care. Therefore, I would like to reissue my call to those members of the public with loved ones at the hospital who are medically fit to leave, to please work with KEMH to receive your family members...so that all possible beds are available if the need arises.

Thank you.

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