



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

COVID-19 UPDATE 11 May

Monday, May 11th, 2020



Good Afternoon,

Between Sunday and today there were 469 test results received by the Ministry of Health; and 1 was positive for COVID-19. I am, however, deeply saddened to say that we lost another person to COVID-19 over the weekend. As is the norm, details of this individual won't be made public by the Ministry to respect the family's right to privacy, especially at this difficult time.

Bermuda now has 119 total confirmed positive cases. Their status is as follows:

- there are 45 active cases, of which
- 37 persons are under active public health monitoring, and

I'm pleased to share that some hospitalized persons have been discharged, so now only

- 8 persons are hospitalized;

- a total of 66 have now recovered, and as indicated earlier
- the total deceased is now 8.

The average age of all of our confirmed positive cases is 60 and the age range of all of our positive cases is from 18 to 101 years. The age of persons hospitalized ranges between 68 and 89 years, and the average age is 77.

On Saturday we completed testing of all 21 of Bermuda's care homes. Although the results of one care home are still being processed, to date we have the results of 333 care home residents and 436 staff members from 20 different care homes. Of all tested, 44 have come back positive.

I now want to share with you the results of The Bermuda Omnibus Pulse Survey which was commissioned by Bermuda Department of Health on the topic of COVID-19.

The survey consisted of telephone interviews with 400 Bermuda residents conducted between April 22th and 29th; during the 'Shelter in Place' requirement.

The survey asked questions on various topics including: COVID-19 News and Information Sources; Self-Quarantine and Reducing Stress; Impact of Shelter in Place on Behaviour; Programmes and Services; and Routine HealthCare Services.

On the topic of self-quarantine, only a minority of residents interviewed were required to self-quarantine (for example, if they travelled abroad), and the vast majority (81 per cent) of those who did self-quarantine indicated they had a suitable space to do so.

Virtually all residents were aware of ways to reduce feelings of stress and anxiety, with by far the most common stress relief tactic being exercising such as walking or running. Meanwhile, two in ten residents mention spending time with and talking to family and friends as a method to relieving stress and anxiety; this was more likely to be mentioned by younger residents.

A variety of behaviours were evaluated to determine what, if any, impact the Shelter in Place order had on residents' behaviour. Some expressed positive changes and others expressed negative changes.

Of note, three in ten indicate they now exercise more frequently than before the Shelter Place order, while the same number indicate exercising less frequently, which is perhaps related to gym closures.

I was pleased to learn that a greater proportion now indicate their eating habits are better (32%) as opposed to worse (19%).

Fewer than two in ten residents (17%) require routine health care services, and of those, just fewer than one-half of those (45%) have indicated the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted their ability to access these services. Of the services they require routinely but have been unable to access, their doctor's office or clinic (36%) and dentist (26%) are most commonly mentioned.

The topic of 'access to healthcare during COVID-19' actually segways perfectly into what I wish to share with you next...

I am thrilled to announce today the creation of a new Telenurse hotline and GP Telehealth consultation service for uninsured and HIP clients.

I want to, firstly, thank Argus Insurance for initiating this programme and making this possible. Argus approached the Government in late March with a proposal to provide Telehealth (nurse and physician) services to uninsured persons at no cost to the Government.

Initially, the programme will work like this: When an individual calls the COVID-19 hotline (444.2498) 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.

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

It is a wonderful way to give back to the residents of Bermuda, particularly the vulnerable population.

It should be noted that this is a pilot and feasibility study. The pilot will allow the Ministry of Health to better understand the extent of need among those in the community who are, for example, out of work because of COVID-19. However, it does not replace health insurance or the need to have a GP.

I can also share that Argus Insurance has implemented a number of financial relief initiatives that will help cash-constrained individuals and groups maintain benefits while deferring premiums.... Argus is offering its clients options to defer this year's premium updates while maintaining benefits to ease hardship on individuals and businesses, where necessary.

In closing, I wish to thank local companies such as Argus who are doing what they can to ease the financial burden on those who need it most during this pandemic.

Thank You.

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