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THURSDAY - MARCH 19TH, 2020

75 CENTS

More COVID-19 Cases Found

BY DEANDRE WILLIAMSON
 Journal Staff Writer

Two more persons have tested positive for COVID-19, bringing the total number of confirmed cases in The Bahamas to three.

Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis announced the additional COVID-19 cases in the House of Assembly yesterday.

"Late last evening health officials confirmed two additional cases of individuals who tested



▶ Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis

\$11 Million Added to Health Sector for COVID-19

CHERIKA JOHNSON
 Journal Staff Writer

An additional \$11 million has been allocated for the health sector to assist in the fight against COVID-19, according to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Peter Turnquest.

In the House of Assembly on Wednesday, Turnquest listed a com-



▶ DPM and Minister of Finance Peter Turnquest

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'EXPECT MORE COVID-19 CASES'



BY LAURENCIA I.A. SMITH
 Journal Staff Writer

Bahamians can expect an increase in the number of coronavirus cases, according to Minister of Health Dr. Duane Sands, as The Bahamas is now a part of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Currently, there are three confirmed cases of COVID-19 in The

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▶ Minister of Health, the Hon. Dr. Duane Sands (centre) provided an update on the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in The Bahamas during a press conference at the Ministry of Health on Wednesday. Also seated, from left: Permanent Secretary, MOH, Marco Rolle and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Pearl McMillan. (BIS Photos/Kemuel Stubbs)

750 COVID-19 Test Kits Available

CHERIKA JOHNSON
 Journal Staff Writer

Minister of Health Dr. Duane Sands said the country presently has 750 COVID-19 test kits available.

In his address in the House of Assembly on Wednesday, Sands said thousands more are on the way as testing will only take place in New Providence.

"We have enhanced testing capacity with an additional 750 test kits in county and are seeking to order an additional 5,000 to 6,000 more. We have tested suspected cases and close contacts of confirmed cases, collaboration between public

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Davis Wants COVID-19 Retroviral Drug from Cuba

BY DEANDRE WILLIAMSON
 Journal Staff Writer

Opposition Leader Philip Davis wants the government to access the retroviral drug Interferon A-B2 through the government of the Republic of Cuba to facilitate the eradication of COVID-19.

The retroviral drug is being used in other jurisdictions to combat the virus.

"I advise that The Bahamas government access Interferon A-B2 through the regional bloc of CARICOM as part of our successful program of functional cooperation on health, national emergencies and disaster management. There are also economies of scale that can be exploited or real-

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ALL THE NEWS YOU NEED TO READ IN THE MORNING

'EXPECT MORE COVID-19 CASES'

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Bahamas. Yesterday, the minister of health, Chief Medical Officer Pearl McMillian and other health officials gave a brief update to the media on the virus as the Ministry of Health has stimulated its plan to lessen the spread of COVID-19.

"Community participation will be critical if we are to change the epidemiologic pattern of cases here in The Bahamas. We can expect an increase in the number of cases within the coming days and we are preparing for that eventuality as and when it

occurs," Dr. Sands said.

He added that together ministries, agencies, departments, businesses, communities, corporations and the general public can succeed a flat line or tapering of the virus, which Dr. Sands said, "Simply means, we will have cases, but not too many cases."

The Ministry of Health is following international practices for testing, as persons who are COVID-19 suspected cases or had close contact with a case will be tested.

"The lab that runs the tests, however, is located in New Providence. But on every island in every community, there are individu-

als who are trained and prepared to evaluate, to assess patients who may be concerned that they have symptoms," Dr. Sands said.

That specimen, taken from the patient would be brought to the capital for examination and if needed the person on the Family Island would have to be brought to the capital by medical personnel and treated at the hospital facilities in New Providence.

Based on the characteristics of COVID-19 which have changed significantly since it was first diagnosed, the minister of health was unable to provide a clear timeline as to

how long the virus will last with in the country.

However, Dr. McMillian said, "I can't give you a concrete time. Now we have the opportunity to influence that, by the measures we're putting in now. The more transmission you get, the harder it is for you to actually get a grip or to actually get us back to the point of normal.

"We have to protect our economy. We have to protect our people and we have to balance. So I can't give you a concrete time. But I'm hopeful that once we get our people doing the things we're asking them to do, we will be in

a better place as it relates to trying to get beyond what we're dealing with now."

The Ministry of Health has implemented some protocols to help in combating the virus, such as practicing social distancing, employing good sanitation practices, avoiding unnecessary travel and decreasing your risk of infection.

If you have a chronic illness, stay at home. Persons at higher risk include the elderly and those who have diabetes, hypertension, asthma, heart disease and kidney disease, along with those who have weakened

immune systems such as cancer patients, those on high-dose steroids, pregnant women, persons with sickle cell disease and cerebral palsy and those morbidly obese.

According to the Johns Hopkins coronavirus dashboard, globally there are about 215,947 confirmed cases. China, Italy and Iran have the highest number reported cases with a death toll of 8,749.

According to the Ministry of Health, The Bahamas has three confirmed cases of COVID-19, 11 persons are in quarantine and 31 persons have been released from quarantine.

Fetus Found in Dumpster

A fetus was found in a dumpster on Wednesday, according to police.

Police said shortly after 11 a.m. they were called

to an area on Sarah Robinson Road, off Farrington Road, where the fetus of a baby was discovered in a dumpster

by sanitation workers.

Police are appealing to the mother to come forward so that she can receive medical and emo-

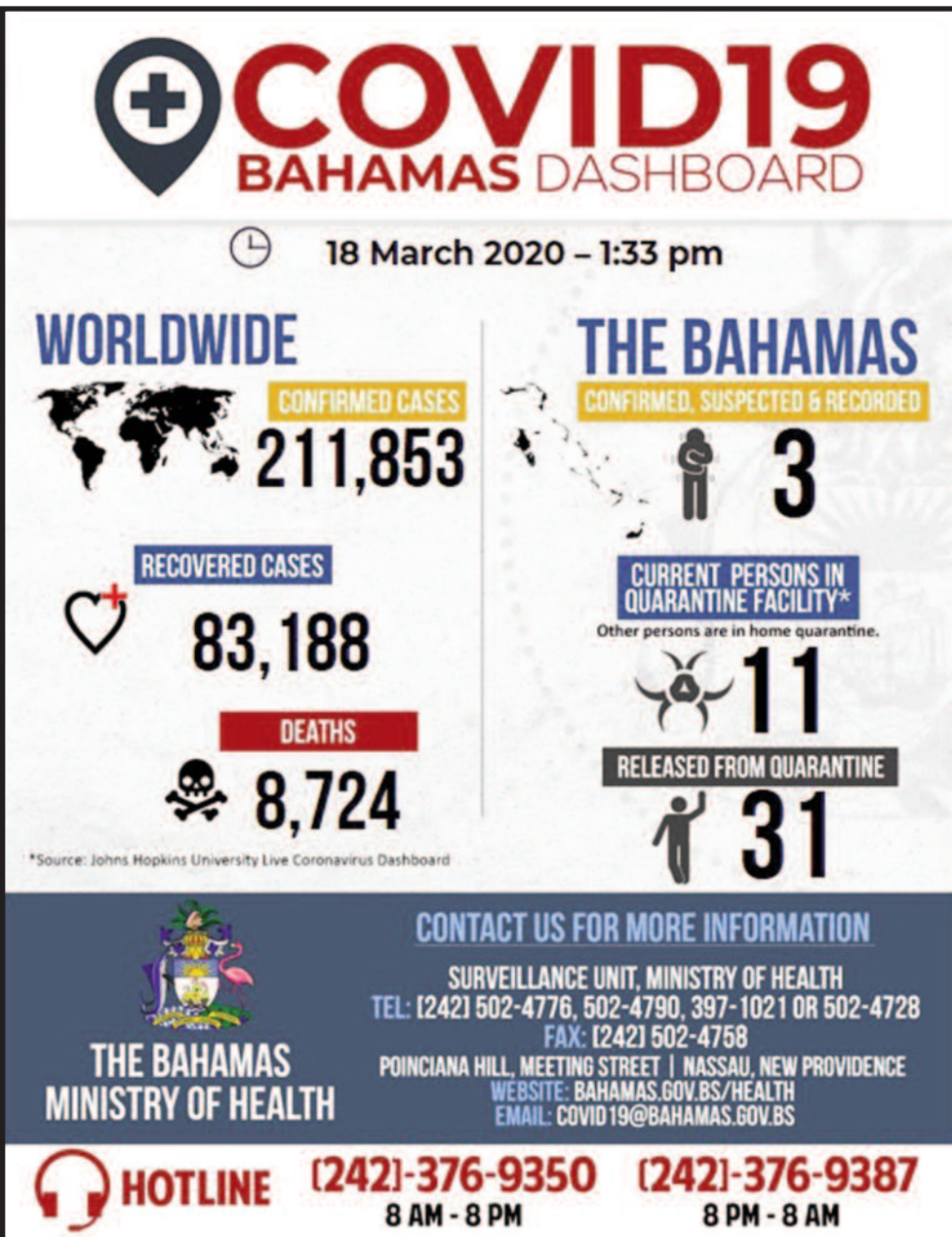
tional assistance.

Members of the public, especially the Sarah Robinson Community, who may have informa-

tion that can assist with this investigation, are asked to contact the Central Detective Unit at 502-9991/2, Crime

Stoppers at 328-TIPS (8477) or the nearest police station.

Investigations are ongoing.



GOVERNMENT NOTICE
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to the general public that the Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas will commence the salvage and demolition of the Clarence A. Bain building, located **University Drive (Old Thompson Boulevard) & Moss Road** beginning **2ND FEBRUARY, 2020** through to **2ND JUNE, 2020** during the hours of **9:00AM to 5:00PM**.

Members of the public are advised to cautiously traverse the area during demolition hours.

Should you have any questions or concerns, kindly submit the same in writing to the Superintending Officer, Director of Public Works, P.O. Box N-8156, Nassau, N.P., The Bahamas.

The public's cooperation in this regard is greatly appreciated.

Signed
Carole Bain-Colebrooke
Carole Bain-Colebrooke (Mrs.)
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Public Works

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\$11 Mil. Added for COVID-19

Continued from / PAGE 1...

pendium of economic measures the government will implement to combat the impact of COVID-19 on the country's economy.

Turnquest said the country is already starting to feel the impact of COVID-19, as he said hotel occupancies have fallen, cruise ship arrivals are on a 30-day hiatus, and as hotel workers are being asked to take unpaid or vacation leave.

However, Turnquest said the economic safety measures put in place will help to mitigate the negative impact.

"In addition to the nearly \$5 million we have already earmarked for healthcare response, we are allocating up to an additional \$11 million to cover detection, isolation, treatment and other COVID-19 mitigation activities," he said.

"We are setting aside \$4 million to provide food

assistance and social support for displaced workers directly impacted by the virus, through the Ministry of Social Services. These food assistance vouchers of \$100 every second week will be targeted primarily to persons within the hospitality industry who are facing reduced work weeks. This allocation will allow for up to eight weeks of benefit payments, but may be adjusted according to need."

Turnquest said the government is also allocating \$10 million to provide for a temporary unemployment benefit, administered through the National Insurance Board, for self-employed persons working in the tourism industry.

Self-employed persons such as straw vendors, tour operators, jet ski operators, do not ordinarily qualify for the National Insurance unemployment benefit as

part of their benefits package.

However, he said the government is making a special accommodation for those self-employed individuals in the tourism industry, given the unprecedented COVID-19 impact.

In addition to these measures, Turnquest said government will commit \$20 million in short term loan support to Bahamian small businesses impacted by COVID-19 situa-

tion, will speed up the approval process for all domestic and foreign capital investments projects currently in the pipeline and will limit all non-essential expenses including but not limited to travel, and the scale-down or postponement of planned events.

Turnquest added that the government has plans to borrow more money at this time as it diligently manages the country's debt levels.

750 COVID-19 Test Kits

Continued from / PAGE 1...

health system and private sector for enhanced treatment capacity and the instillation of a modular unit at the Princess Margaret Hospital," Dr. Sands said.

"The steps we take now

and in the days ahead will determine the degree of the spread of the coronavirus in The Bahamas. We all have a role to play."

Dr. Sands added that health officials have begun contact tracing after the confirmed cases of three individuals who contracted

the virus.

Dr. Sands said contact tracing investigations have revealed that household members of the first COVID-19 positive patient traveled to Canada, Trinidad and Dubai – countries with known community transmission.

He said these household contacts have been quarantined and samples taken for testing.

Dr. Sands added that other contacts, including healthcare providers, are being investigated to determine their level of exposure and risk.

The minister of health noted that a total of 30 contacts of the COVID-19 positive patient have been identified.

Dr. Sands reiterated the need for the public to maintain a distance of at least three to six feet, disinfect surfaces regularly,

wash hands with soap and water and avoid unnecessary travel.

He encouraged the public to use the Ministry of Health's recently launched COVID-19 website, www.covid19.gov.bs for more information and updates.

NIB Issues Orange Alert

TYLER SYMONETTE
Journal Staff Writer

The National Insurance Board (NIB) issued an orange alert in light of the spread of COVID-19 in The Bahamas.

This orange alert has affected NIB's operations to limit the

risk to staff and protect those most vulnerable, such as the elderly, to the outbreak.

As of yesterday, NIB customer service departments will remain open throughout The Bahamas but the face-to-face interviews that usually

accompany the submission of new claims are suspended for the time being.

NIB will be collecting forms, but customer service representatives will call or email clients if further clarification is needed.

Face-to-face pen-

sion verifications will also be suspended until further notice.

For convenience, beneficiaries will be able to submit their forms online or make use of the drop boxes available at NIB offices.

Additionally, cus-

tomers may call the verification hotline at 502-1556 if they have any questions.

NIB has also suspended all smart card renewals. Therefore, all smart cards should continue to be used and are considered valid, regardless of the

expiration date printed.

Those who also need to pay NIB contributions are urged to sign up for the employer self service (ESS) by emailing their request to ess@nib-bahamas.com and compliance@nib-bahamas.com.



URCA'S PUBLIC NOTICE

The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority, URCA, advises the public that in the interest of public health and in consideration of the stance taken by the Government of The Bahamas in its efforts to contain the spread of COVID 19, URCA will immediately implement the following safety measures.

"In person" visits to its Frederick Street Office is discouraged until further notice. All meetings previously scheduled to be held at URCA's office will be scheduled virtually. URCA will provide details of the virtual meeting plan at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting. Other persons needing the services of the authority should contact URCA at 242 393 0234 or send an email to info@urcabahamas.bs; or visit our website at www.urcabahamas.bs.

Persons who feel they must visit the office will be asked to comply with URCA's prescribed social distancing protocols. The protocols will be available on URCA's social media platforms and posted at URCA's office entrance.

URCA further urges the public to take all necessary precautions to protect themselves, family and community. Should members of the public wish to file a complaint about services in the regulated sectors, please call 242 393 0263 or use the email info@urcabahamas.bs or go to URCA's social media platforms.

URCA will continue to provide the public with updates concerning its operations over the next few weeks. URCA considers the health and wellbeing of its employees and members of the public of utmost importance. URCA will continue to monitor and observe the established COVID 19 public health protocols of the relevant Government agencies.



PUBLIC NOTICE

The Ministry of Public Works/Bahamix, has scheduled Milling and Paving works for the North Bound Land of Beatrice Avenue between Charles Saunders Highway and Prince Charles Drive. The works will also incorporate the Junction of Charles Saunders and Beatrice Ave.

The road resurfacing will begin March 19th, 2020, between the hours of 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Works are scheduled Monday through Friday for 7 business days, or until completion of the works.

Bahamix will close the North bound lane and implement a two way traffic system on the South Bound Lane.

ONLY RESIDENTS be will allowed to access the paving site. All other motorists are asked to avoid the area if possible and be aware of and acknowledge the posted traffic paving signs.

If you have any queries or concerns, please feel free to contact us at telephone numbers (242) 361-3886 or (242) 341-3886.

Bahamix apologizes for any inconvenience caused.

More Cases Found

Continued from / PAGE 1...

positive for COVID-19 on New Providence," he said.

"These individuals were identified through contact tracing. The Ministry of Health's surveillance unit has aggressively undertaken contact tracing activities for the initial case reported.

"These contact tracing investigations have revealed that household members of the COVID-19 positive patient traveled to jurisdictions with known community transmission - Canada, Trinidad and Dubai."

According to Dr. Minnis, these household contacts have been quarantined and samples were taken for testing.

"Other contacts, including healthcare providers, are being investigated to determine their level of exposure and risk," he added.

"A total of 30 contacts of the COVID-19 positive patient have been identified."

On Sunday, The Bahamas confirmed its

first case of COVID-19 after a 61-year-old female resident tested positive for the disease.

Health officials said the woman has no history of traveling outside the country within the last 20 days and she is in stable condition.

In the House of Assembly, the prime minister also presented the Emergency Powers COVID-19 Regulations 2020 and announced that the governor general issued a proclamation of emergency that took effect on March 17.

"The proclamation will give the government necessary and emergency powers to aggressively combat the COVID-19 emergency," Dr. Minnis said.

"I wish to state the new emergency measures we are enacting are to save lives and to protect our country."

The measures are outlined in the Emergency Powers COVID-19 Regulations 2020 that was tabled in the House of Assembly on Wednesday.

"The regulations allow for the following new authority for state. Where a health officer has reasonable grounds to believe a person is or may be infected or contaminated with COVID-19, and the health officer considers there is a risk the person might infect or contaminate others, the health officer may order such a person detained for screening and assessment," Dr. Minnis said.

"Following such an assessment, a health officer is empowered to impose on or in relation to that person any other restriction or requirement the health officer considers necessary to remove or reduce the risk of infecting or contaminating others."

According to the prime minister, a health officer may require that a person be kept in isolation if the health officer has reasonable grounds to believe a person is or may be infected or contaminated with COVID-19, and the health officer considers that it is necessary and

proportionate to do so in order to reduce or remove the risk of the person infecting or contaminating others.

"We need the power to order people into isolation to stop the spread of this virus," Dr. Minnis said.

He also explained that broader social distancing of the public is key to limiting COVID-19's spread.

"Through these regulations the prime minister may, by order, cause to be revoked or suspended all permits for the use of public open spaces in any particular area, or an entire island, or the country as a whole in the interest of public health safety," Dr. Minnis said.

"The prime minister may, by order, prohibit the assembly of two or more persons in a public place in any area specified in the interest of public health safety.

"The prime minister may, by order, impose isolation on all individuals within a particular area, island or the entire

country in the interest of public health safety.

"Where isolation has been imposed, the prime minister may require the closure of all educational or religious institutions in the area specified; require the closure of any business or organization that caters to the public in the areas specified, unless permitted otherwise by the order; prohibit the visitation by persons at all residential care establishments; prohibit the visitation by people at all correctional facilities; require every person to confine him or herself at his or her place of residence and enclosed property, unless otherwise specified by the order; permit the travel of persons to a grocery store, gas station, pharmacy, doctor, hospital or such other place as may be specified in the order."

The regulations also provide for curfews during the emergency proclamation period if deemed necessary.

"The prime minister may, by order, require

every person within any area specified to remain within doors between such hours as specified in the order," Dr. Minnis said.

"The prime minister may, by order, prohibit a person from residing in or entering any area specified in the order if such person is suspected of acting or of having acted, or of being about to act, in a manner prejudicial to the public safety; the supply or distribution of any necessity of life; or, the preservation of the peace."

The regulations also address the dissemination of fake news.

"Under these regulations, no person shall publish or cause to be published, posted or reposted over any media platform, inclusive of social media, any purported news or report or purported statement of fact, knowing or having reasonable cause to suspect the same is untrue or false, or may incite public fear, panic or ethnic hatred," Dr. Minnis said.

Emergency Powers (COVID-19) Regulations

The governor general issued an Emergency Powers Proclamation effective Tuesday 17 March in an effort to combat the spread of Covid-19.

The Proclamation gives the Government the necessary powers to aggressively combat the COVID-19 emergency.

The new emergency measures are to save lives and to protect The Bahamas, and are included in the Emergency Powers (C O V I D - 1 9)

Regulations, 2020, passed in the House of Assembly on Wednesday 18 March.

The major components of the Regulations include:

Health Officers have been empowered to take certain actions to prevent the spread of the disease

-Where a health officer believes that someone is infected, they may order such a person detained for screening and assessment. The officer is also empowered to impose the neces-

sary restrictions of movement to prevent further spread of infection.

-Where the infected is a minor, a parent or guardian will be responsible for ensuring compliance with any restriction of movement.

-A health officer can order isolation on reasonable grounds in order to prevent further spread of the disease.

Public gatherings may be restricted

-Under the emergency proclamation, permits for use of public spaces can be

suspended nationally in the interest of public safety. This suspension can cover an assembly of as little as two persons in public areas.

Public movement may be restricted

-The Prime Minister may also impose isolation or confine persons to their homes. Under these circumstances, all educational and religious institutions would be closed. Certain businesses and other entities catering to the public may be ordered closed. Visits to residential

care establishments such as senior care facilities would be prohibited. Visits to correctional facilities would be prohibited. Trips to the grocery store, gas station, pharmacy, doctor, hospital may be regulated or limited to certain times.

Curfews may also be imposed if necessary. Certain areas may have access restricted

-Under the emergency proclamation persons may be restricted from entering certain areas in the interest of public safety, in order to

keep the peace or to allow the ease of distribution of necessary supplies.

Vehicles and buildings may be requisitioned by the Government

-The Prime Minister may requisition any buildings, aircraft or marine vessel or any other craft as necessary.

Essential services may be requisitioned

-Essential services, whether public or private, may be requisitioned under this

See page 6...

Bubbles, zero calories



DASANI SPARKLING

COVID-19 Pandemic is Now a Major Global Health Threat

As of 16th March 2020, there have been 164,837 cases and 6,470 deaths confirmed worldwide. Global spread has been rapid, with 146 countries now having reported at least one case.

The last time the world responded to a global emerging disease epidemic of the scale of the current COVID-19 pandemic with no access to vaccines was the 1918-19 H1N1 influenza pandemic. In that pandemic, some communities, notably in the United States (US), responded with a variety of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) - measures intended to reduce transmission by reducing contact rates in the general population¹. Examples of the measures adopted during this time included closing schools, churches, bars and other social venues. Cities in which these interventions were implemented early in the epidemic were successful at reducing case numbers while the interventions remained in place and experienced lower mortality overall¹. However, transmission rebounded once controls were lifted.

Whilst our understanding of infectious diseases and their prevention is now very different compared to in 1918, most of the countries across the world face the same challenge today with COVID-19, a virus with comparable lethality to H1N1 influenza in 1918. Two fundamental strategies are possible²:

(a) Suppression. Here the aim is to reduce the reproduction number (the average number of secondary cases each case generates), R, to below 1 and hence to reduce case numbers to low levels or (as for SARS or Ebola) eliminate human-to-human transmission. The main challenge of this approach is that NPIs (and drugs, if available) need to be maintained – at least intermittently - for as long as the virus is circulating in the human population, or until a vaccine becomes available. In the case of COVID-19, it will be at least a 12-18 months before a vaccine is available³. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that initial vaccines will have high efficacy.

(b) Mitigation. Here the aim is to use NPIs (and vaccines or drugs, if available) not to interrupt transmission completely, but to reduce the health

impact of an epidemic, akin to the strategy adopted by some US cities in 1918, and by the world more generally in the 1957, 1968 and 2009 influenza pandemics. In the 2009 pandemic, for instance, early supplies of vaccine were targeted at individuals with pre-existing medical conditions which put them at risk of more severe disease⁴. In this scenario, population immunity builds up through the epidemic, leading to an eventual rapid decline in case numbers and transmission dropping to low levels.

The strategies differ in whether they aim to reduce the reproduction number, R, to below 1 (suppression) – and thus cause case numbers to decline – or to merely slow spread by reducing R, but not to below 1.

In this report, we consider the feasibility and implications of both strategies for COVID-19, looking at a range of NPI measures. It is important to note at the outset that given SARS-CoV-2 is a newly emergent virus, much remains to be understood about its transmission. In addition, the impact of many of the NPIs detailed here depends critically on how people respond to their introduction, which is highly likely to vary between countries and even communities. Last, it is highly likely that there would be significant spontaneous changes in population behaviour even in the absence of government-mandated interventions.

We do not consider the ethical or economic implications of either strategy here, except to note that there is no easy policy decision to be made. Suppression, while successful to date in China and South Korea, carries with it enormous social and economic costs which may themselves have significant impact on health and well-being in the short and longer-term. Mitigation will never be able to completely protect those at risk from severe disease or death and the resulting mortality may therefore still be high. Instead we focus on feasibility, with a specific focus on what the likely healthcare system impact of the two approaches would be. We present results for Great Britain (GB) and the United States (US), but they are equally applicable to most high-income countries.

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Wendall K. Jones
Publisher/Chief Executive Officer

Kimaley P. Jones
Vice President/Operations

E D I T O R I A L

TESTING IS A PRIORITY

As the Bahamas responds to COVID -19, testing for the virus among the population is extremely important. While social distancing is extremely important to flatten the curve of the disease, there are many people who believe that the virus would affect many Bahamians because the country does not have the resources to test the number of people necessary to reduce the incidence of the virus. This must be the highest priority of the government. In the meantime, the practice of good hygiene is important. In addition, the country must invest in the adequate amount of protective gear for the healthcare professionals who have to work with people who are presented to them for examination or testing.

There are many people who are not taking COVID 19 seriously. Many Bahamians are going about their business as usual. If we are not able have the amount of testing necessary, social distancing while important will not solve our problem alone.

The government has put in place the Emergency Regulations of 2020 to suppress the transmission of the virus. Although not bin effect, these regulations provide the government with the authority under the Emergency Powers Act for securing the public safety, the defence of the Bahamas and the maintenance of public order.

Given the death toll of the virus around the world, the government has been proactive and very responsible in having the authority with the regulations for the detention of persons who may be infected or contaminated with the COVID-19 and A health Officer may require a persons be kept in isolation, if the health officer has reasonable grounds to believe that a person is infected of contaminated with COVID-19.

Currently there are three positive cases in the Bahamas and so testing and social distancing are critical to reverse the increase in the cases.

In the regulations presented in the House of Assembly yesterday, the Prime Minister, the competent authority, may by order prohibit the assembly of two or more persons in a public place in any area specified, in the interest of public health safety. The Prime Minister may by order, impose isolation on all individuals within a particular area, island or the entire country in the

interest of public health safety.

The Public health rules and or guidelines will change the lives of Bahamians for a long time. We cannot be placed in lockdown situation for too long. That is why testing must be a national priority. Currently, as a result of COVID 19, the tourism industry is shutting down with the dislocation of thousands of Bahamians. There is no doubt that the economy is being devastated. Even when the war against the virus is won, it will take the country many months to recover from the devastation. The Minister of Finance, Peter Turnquest told members of the House of Assembly, "It is important that members appreciate that even if the threat subsides over the next three to four months and the tourism sector begins to rebound, it is likely that such a rebound will be slow and measured. Thus, it is important to highlight that our upcoming budget must be informed by a reality that the government will likely need to continue to use fiscal measures to boost investment and consumption and mitigate against a contracting economy."

He said, "ultimately, the pace of the eventual economic recovery will largely depend on global factors, including how quickly the United States, Europe and China are able to reverse the spread of COVID 19. However, the government is confident that we have the wherewithal and access to the resources needed to get through emerging social, investment and other private support needs to minimise the negative impact on Bahamians and the broader economy.

We are indeed in uncharted territory. For tourism dependent countries like the Bahamas, it will not be easy to reverse the damage caused by the closure of our Cruise Ports for more than a month and the reduction of air travel. We must learn from these catastrophic events and circumstances that befall our country, especially since we are so dependent on tourism. COVID-19 has now highlighted our vulnerabilities, our deficiencies, our shortcomings of our economy and the society at large. Moving forward, the Bahamas must find the modalities and the cushion to offset the international maladies and economic downfalls which are bound to come in the future.

GOT NEWS?
Please call The Bahama Journal's News TIP LINE at 356-7254 and let us know!

THE BAHAMAS
Sun, Sand, Sea and the
The Bahama Journal
NO BETTER READING

Emergency Powers Regulations

Continued from / PAGE 1...

proclamation. These include:
-Water collection, storage, purification or distribution
-The collection, storage and treatment of sewage or garbage
-The manufacture, storage or distribution of gas for

public use
-The removal, handling and burial of the dead
-The removal, handling and burial of dead animals
Certain laws may be waived
-To facilitate the government's procurement of needed goods, rules or laws related to such pro-

urement may be waived. Under such circumstances, within six weeks, the Ministry of Finance would be required to give a proper accounting related to the procurement.
Certain fees may be waived
-The Prime Minister may also waive or vary the payment of any fees for

the testing and medical services rendered at any public hospital or health-care facility in relation to Covid-19.
The dissemination of malicious and misleading information is prohibited
-Under these regulations, no person shall publish or cause to be published,

posted or re-posted over any media platform, inclusive of social media, any purported news or report, or purported statement of fact, knowing or having reasonable cause to suspect the same is: untrue or false; or may incite public fear, panic or ethnic hatred.
Regional or international

al military assistance may be requested
-Out of an abundance of caution, the Governor General may authorize international or regional military or police forces to serve a peace officers to maintain order, and to ensure the safekeeping and distribution of supplies.

Davis Wants COVID-19 Retroviral Drug

Continued from / PAGE 1...

ized through this procurement process," Davis said yesterday.
Jamaica Opposition Leader and President of the People's National Party Peter Phillips reached out to the government of the Republic of Cuba for Jamaica to access the Interferon

Alpha 2B medication to treat COVID-19.
In addition, Davis also called on the government to seriously consider the three key components of testing, effective medication and containment.
"An aggressive random testing regime coupled with a strategy of targeted containment has proven to be an effective preventative

measure as evidenced by a relatively low viral transmission rate in countries like Singapore and South Korea," he said.
The opposition also cautioned the government to exercise with caution, due care and attention, the powers which it has arrogated into itself during this special health emergency.
"Our party intends to

watch and monitor carefully the exercise of these extraordinary powers to be sure that these powers are used for the benefit of the Bahamian people," Davis explained.
"I however note that to date, there has been no reported case of non-compliance by Bahamians to any guideline and public service announcement

issued by the government on COVID-19. We commend them for their continued cooperation.
"In light of this, the opposition cautions the government not to overreach on our civil liberties."
Davis said he raised these critical issues to underscore the need for all Bahamians to be prepared

and to leave no stone unturned in this national fight against COVID-19.
"Bahamians are encouraged to continue their cooperation with official directives and guidelines so that together we can put this existential threat behind us in the shortest possible time and return to a life of normalcy," he said.



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Bahamas' Foreign Exchange Reserves Position in Limbo

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance the Hon. Peter Turnquest stated that the projected contraction in tourism activity will inevitably have an adverse impact on The Bahamas' foreign exchange reserves position, which stood at a healthy \$2,030 million at mid-March 2020.

"Based on preliminary projections, exter-

nal reserves could decline by some \$900 million by end-2020, DPM Turnquest explained as he presented the Statement on the Fiscal and Economic Impact of COVID-19 in the House of Assembly, Wednesday, March 18, 2020

"Under this scenario, the country would still have a manageable level of foreign reserves.

However, the Central Bank will continue to monitor and judiciously manage the reserve holdings."

He said the Ministry of Finance will support the measures that the Central Bank adopts to ensure that the country's foreign reserve holdings remain adequate for ongoing financial and commercial needs.

He said the Ministry has included the

Clearing Banks Association in its consultation on the proposed mitigating measures to address the current situation.

"The banks have reiterated to me their commitment to helping their clients through challenging times. They have advised that if persons are experiencing financial difficulties during this period, that they should contact their

banks to understand the options that are available to them, such as payment deferrals, credit limit increases, or other measures to offer temporary relief.

"As this issue progresses, the banks have stated their intent to offer more tailored products and services to persons who financially are negatively impacted by the economic effects of COVID-19."

The DPM said, "The banks have however stressed that for now, it is important that clients who – because of their changing circumstances – find themselves in financial duress, that these customers should go in before they fall into arrears so that their specific situation can be assessed and addressed within the range of the banks' available tools."

RBC Takes Decisive Action to Aid Clients Impacted by COVID-19

TORONTO (CANADA) – Yesterday, RBC Royal Bank (RY on TSX and NYSE) ("RBC") announced plans to provide financial relief to its Caribbean clients impacted by the ongoing novel coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic.

Effective immediately, most RBC Personal

banking clients in the Caribbean will benefit from an automatic three-month payment deferral on credit facilities. Business and Corporate banking clients are also eligible for the relief program, following individual eligibility assessments with an RBC representative. Automatic payment deferrals will be

applied as of March 17, 2020 and remain in effect until June 30, 2020, or until further advised.

To be eligible for the program, Personal banking or Business and Corporate banking client accounts must be current and in good standing as of March 2, 2020. Clients who are already participat-

ing in RBC relief programs for other circumstances are excluded from this program.

The relief program is intended to provide flexible solutions and help clients manage through the impacts of COVID-19, such as pay disruption; child-care disruption due to school closures; or

dealing with the COVID-19 illness itself.

These measures are an important first step and underscore the resilience of the financial system and the critical role banks play in the economy. RBC will continue to monitor COVID-19 and the evolving economic conditions in each

country and territory where the bank operates. RBC may consider other relief measures, if necessary.

RBC has a long history of standing by Caribbean clients through challenging times and this commitment will continue throughout this crisis and beyond.



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Education Continues with Virtual Schools

TYLER SYMONETTE
Journal Staff Writer

Minister of Education Jeffrey Lloyd announced that despite schools being closed, the Ministry of Education has arranged plans to continue the learning process for students, which includes virtual classrooms.

On March 15, Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis announced that all public and private educational institutions will be closed until April 14, 2020.

This announcement came after many schools days were cancelled following Hurricane Dorian.

Despite this, Mr. Lloyd stated that students cannot afford to have a single day of further loss of education time.

"Teachers are to continue to engage students through the media groups that they have already established," he said.

"Where that has not been done, they are directed to report to school maintaining social distance, secure the register of their students while securing also useful educational materials and to create such groups with the assistance of the school's management director and the director of education."

Mr. Lloyd added that the virtual platform for learning, which was launched in September 2019, is currently being



► Minister of Education Jeffrey Lloyd

upgraded and will be able to accommodate 100,000 students by March 23. About 50 teachers have already been trained for this platform.

Bahamas Telecommunications Company (BTC) is also facilitating a one-on-one learning facility platform which will also be ready on March 23 to provide weekend and personalized sessions to students.

The Ministry of Education has plans for 12th grade students, who are scheduled to graduate in the coming months.

"Beginning on March the 30, two weeks from this past Monday, 12th graders and secondary

students even will have live classes in the core subject areas, English, Math and so on," Mr. Lloyd said.

"They will additionally have optional subjects upon their request. As you have heard, we will conquer this malady only if all hands are on deck, which means that everyone must take on the responsibility of our children's continuing education."

The minister also noted that if parents do not have internet access they are free to call the school to have all the materials being posted online printed for their children.

Men Charged with Murder

BY LAURENCIA I.A. SMITH
Journal Staff Writer

Philip Murphy, 18, of Roberto Drive and 26-year-old Joey Jolissaint, of Spitfire

Road, off Cowpen Road, were charged with murder yesterday in the Magistrate's Court. The men appeared before Chief

Magistrate Joyann Ferguson-Pratt where they were arraigned for the murder of Edward Charles. According to police, on March 8, 2020

Charles' lifeless body was found in a bushy off Carmichael Road. Both men were not allowed to enter a plea and were remanded to The

Bahamas Department of Correctional Services (BDOCS) until May 28. Also, both men have medical issues

and requested to be placed in the sick bay of the correctional facility. They were both represented by attorney Jomo Campbell.

Haitian Man Charged with Murder

BY LAURENCIA I.A. SMITH
Journal Staff Writer

Thirty-one-year-old Haitian national Luckson Charite, of

Sea Breeze Lane, was charged with murder yesterday before Chief Magistrate Joyann Ferguson-Pratt. It is alleged that Charite

murdered Shantia McKenize on February 29, 2020. According to police, McKenize was in the area of

Palm Tree Avenue and Market Street when she was shot multiple times. Charite was not allowed to enter a plea and he was

remanded to The Bahamas Department of Correctional Services until May 28. He was represented by attorney Jomo Campbell.

Prime Minister Minnis Calls for Unity to Overcome Crisis

The Free National Movement (FNM) issued the following statement regarding yesterday's address by Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis:

"The COVID-19 virus is unprecedented in nature and the Government is taking the unprecedented steps to fight this growing, world-wide pandemic. Our Prime Minister, Dr. Hubert Minnis, understands the challenges we are facing and realizes

that a crisis of this magnitude demands extraordinary measures. He also understands that while we are a resilient nation and our economy will recover, this virus is a life-or-death threat especially to vulnerable segments of our community. So we agree with the Prime Minister that it is essential that our leaders stand united and work together to take the necessary actions today to try to control the outbreak

of the virus.

"The Minnis Administration is demonstrating in word and in action that its number one priority is the health and safety of the Bahamian people by taking swift and aggressive action to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. This will require sacrifice from all corners to battle this unseen enemy. As our leaders are making clear it may seem

Man Accused of Murder

BY LAURENCIA I.A. SMITH
Journal Staff Writer

Evenette Phillips, 32, of Lazaretta Road, was charged with murder yesterday before Chief Magistrate Joyann Ferguson-Pratt.

It is alleged that Phillips is

responsible for the murder of Cynthia Wilson back on March 13, 2020, in the Carmichael Road area.

Phillips was not allowed to enter a plea and was remanded to The Bahamas Department of Correctional Services until May 28.

exhausting at times and the economic effects dark, but if we battle together today we will weather the struggles of tomorrow together.

"Bahamians are resilient. We have faced desperate challenges

before and we look to our leaders now to help guide us through this historically unprecedented fight. Our Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Minnis, will continue making decisions in the best interest

of all Bahamians. We hope all our Government, religious, civic, business and community leaders continue to work together in unprecedented cooperation for the greater good of Bahamians."



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JOB OPPORTUNITY Chief Executive Officer

ABOUT URCA:

The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority ("URCA") is the independent regulator of the Electronic Communications Sector (comprising broadcasting, radio spectrum and electronic communications) and the Electricity Sector in The Bahamas. URCA's mission is "Improving lives through effective utilities regulation".

URCA is seeking to attract a highly qualified and motivated individual with proven leadership ability to fill the post of Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO has overall responsibility for strategic direction and the leadership of URCA. In partnership with the other executive members and under the overall direction of the Board, the CEO leads the organisation in the fulfillment of its mandate.

The CEO is based in The Bahamas, is an executive member of, and reports to, URCA's Board.

JOB DUTIES:

The CEO has overall responsibility for the alignment of the organization's performance with its strategic vision and mission, and directs day to day operations of URCA while guiding colleagues and other executive officers towards URCA's shared objectives. The CEO is the primary champion of URCA's Core Values.

As this is an executive level role, the CEO's duties are dependent on the changing requirements of the organisation from time to time, and the CEO is expected to handle such matters as may be required to achieve URCA's vision, mission and strategic objectives.

Additional duties will include:

- Lead and promote the mandate of URCA as set out in the URCA, Communications and Electricity Acts, and other applicable legislation.
- Take total ownership and overall responsibility for, policy development, priority mapping and stake holder management in all sectors regulated and resources managed by URCA, as well as for the effective strategic leadership and day to day management of URCA.
- As URCA is a people centered organisation, the CEO must have a strong commitment to development of its human resources and promotion of a healthy work environment and organizational culture.
- The CEO is expected to build and develop institutional capability by guiding, coaching, and managing members of the team toward building an effective and efficient regulator.
- Ownership includes, but is not limited to, prioritizing and achieving strategic initiatives and use of scarce resources, and the monitoring, implementation and reporting same to the Board.

QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE:

Candidates considered for the position of CEO will have already established themselves in a senior leadership position within an organisation with similar characteristics or responsibilities to URCA, or in an industry relevant to URCA's work. Candidates will also meet the following specific requirements regarding qualifications and work experience:

- Must hold a university degree at the post graduate level in the area of law, economics, engineering, accounting or business management or a professional designation that is equivalent, or equivalent experience.
- A minimum of fifteen years progressive professional work experience.
- Must have worked in a regulated sector (i.e. communications, and broadcasting, electricity, or water sectors) for a minimum of ten years; both regulatory and industry experience would be an asset.
- Experience in regulation in a leadership role would be an asset.
- Minimum of seven years' experience working at senior/ executive level.
- Experience in working on multi-sector regulatory issues would be an asset.

REMUNERATION & BENEFITS:

URCA is a performance driven organisation and offers a competitive and attractive remuneration and benefits package as well as opportunities for career enrichment. Through URCA's various international affiliations, employees have the opportunity for global exposure in the areas of regulation and competition. For more information about URCA, please visit our website: www.urcabahamas.bs

INTERESTED?

Applications should be received on or before **31 March, 2020**. URCA thanks all applicants for their interest but only applicants who have been short-listed and have the qualifications and experience requested will be contacted. Interested applicants should email their resume to: info@orgsoul.com