



## Department of Health & Wellness

*Communications on this subject  
should be addressed to:  
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### **Press Release**

#### **SAINT LUCIA REMAINS ON HIGH ALERT FOR COVID-19**

As of April 23, 2020 the World Health Organization reported a total of 2, 544, 792 confirmed cases of COVID-19 globally, with 175, 694 deaths. There are now 957, 402 confirmed cases in the region of the Americas. The affected region includes Dominican Republic (5,300), Haiti (58), Barbados (75), Jamaica (233), Cuba (1189), Dominica (16), Grenada (14), Trinidad and Tobago (115), Guyana (67), Antigua and Barbuda (24), Bahamas (65), Saint Vincent and Grenadines (13), Guadeloupe (148), Martinique (164), Puerto Rico (1,298), US Virgin Islands (54), and Cayman Islands (66).

Saint Lucia has recorded a total of 15 confirmed cases of COVID-19 all of whom have recovered and been discharged from care. Results received on Friday, April 24, 2020 from testing carried out during the period April 21-24, 2020 of 60 samples are all negative.

We note that this is as a result of the collective efforts of our health professionals working collaboratively to manage our cases and the sacrifices made by the public during the period of shut down. Though this 100 percent recovery rate provides us with a milestone worth recognizing, we at the Ministry of Health continue to caution the public that any gains attained should not be understood as a reason to let down our guard or to throw caution to the wind. We are still implementing our national response to the COVID-19 epidemic and as such, we should collectively remain focused and committed to reducing the spread of this virus.

At this stage, it is still difficult to accurately predict how the pandemic will progress for us in Saint Lucia. Three possible outcomes are complete interruption of human to human transmission, recurring epidemic waves (small and large) and continuous low level transmission. It must be noted that as we gradually facilitate the availability of essential services the risk of transmission is increased. We predict recurring epidemic waves with low level transmission. This requires that the public work closely with us in maintaining the physical distancing measures at all times.

The Ministry of Health has to remain vigilant and maintain the capacity for early detection, aggressive contact tracing, quarantine and isolation, testing and treatment capacity. The health education component is critical to keep you informed in a timely manner. We have expanded the testing protocols to cover persons with respiratory symptoms within the communities, which will continue today and over the weekend.

At our health facilities persons who present with flu-like symptoms are assessed and persons who satisfy the clinical requirements for COVID-19 are tested. With on-going screening and testing, there is the likelihood of new cases being confirmed in the coming days or weeks. Though there is no immediate evidence of circulation of COVID-19 within our population or evidence of community spread, it cannot be assumed that there are currently no cases or that new cases cannot be detected. With this in mind, every individual is asked to protect their health and well-being. Ensure that all the recommended infection prevention and control measures are being followed closely. This includes the use of facial masks, cough and sneeze etiquette and frequent hand washing.

The Ministry of Health continues active surveillance for COVID-19 but in the interim we ask all to remain guarded. If you are experiencing flu-like symptoms go to the nearest respiratory clinic or call one of our tele-medicine physicians for guidance. If there is the need for any general information on COVID-19 you may call our 311 information hotline from 7 a.m. to 12 midnight daily. All these telephone services are free to public.

The Department of Health and Wellness will continue providing regular updates on COVID-19.

*For more information please contact the Office of the Chief Medical Officer or the Epidemiology Unit, at 468-5309/468-5317 respectively*