More COVID-19 Cases Found

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 positive for COVID-19, bringing the total number of confirmed cases in The Bahamas to three,” said Minnis in his address in the House of Assembly on Wednesday.

Minister of Health Dr. Duane Sands 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.

Ministers of State for Health, Hon. Mark brunette, and Assistant Minister of State for Finance, Dwayne C. summit, were also present at the press conference.

In 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, Farquhar listed a comprehensive list of measures taken by the Ministry of Health to combat the spread of COVID-19 in The Bahamas.

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 Bahamas.

Davis Wants COVID-19 Retroviral Drug from Cuba

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-

750 COVID-19 Test Kits Available

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 5,000 more. We have tested suspected cases and close contacts of confirmed cases, collaboration between public

‘EXPECT MORE COVID-19 CASES’

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Cherika Johnson
Journal Staff Writer

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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 emotional assistance.

Members of the public, especially the Sarah Robinson Community, who may have information that can assist with this investigation, are asked to contact the Central Detective Unit at 502-9991. Crime Stoppers at 328-TIPS (8477) or the nearest police station.

Investigations are ongoing.

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The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority, URCA, has announced that in the best interest of 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 disallowed 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.

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, they can call the 393 0234, 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 well-being 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.

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 paved area 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.
positive for COVID-19 on contact tracing. The Ministry of Health’s surveillance unit has aggressively undertaken contact tracing activities for the initial case reported.

“Those contact investigations have revealed that household contacts of the COVID-19 positive patient traveling outside the country in the last 20 days and she is in stable condition. In the House of Assembly, the prime minister also presented the regulations for the initial case reported.

The regulations allow for the following or new authority for state. Where a health officer has reason 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. The regulations will give the government necessary and emergency powers to aggressively combat the COVID-19 emergency. The regulations ban the assembly of as many as two persons anywhere in the 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, 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 himself or herself at his or her place of residence and enclosed property, unless otherwise specified by the order; and 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 determined necessary.

Emergency POWERS (COVID-19) Regulations


The regulations give the Government the necessary powers to aggressively combat the COVID-19 emergency. The new emergency powers are to serve lives and to protect The Bahamas, and are included in the Emergency Powers (COVID-19) Regulations, 2020, passed in the House of Assembly on Wednesday, March 11, 2020.

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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 emergency as a result of an epidemic of the scale of the current COVID-19 pandemic with no access to vaccines was the 1918-1919 H1N1 flu 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 population. 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 overall. 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 countries have worldwide the world face the same challenge today with COVID-19, a virus with which many are unfamiliar. The main challenge of this approach is that NPIs (and vaccines or drugs, if available) not to interrupt transmission. The main challenge of this approach is to reduce transmissibility, and hence to reduce 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 two strategies for COVID-19, looking at a range of NPI measures. It is important to note that the control of SARS-CoV-2 is a new 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, the impact of many of the NPIs with it enormous social and economic implications of either strategy 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 overall. However, transmission rebounded once controls were lifted.

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Emergency Powers Regulations

Continued from / PAGE 1

C ertain laws may be waived
-To facilitate the government’s procurement of needed goods, rules or laws related to such procurement 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 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 as peace officers to maintain order, and to ensure the safekeeping and distribution of supplies.

Davis Wants COVID-19 Retroviral Drug

Continued from / PAGE 1

Davis said yesterday.

Jamica 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 careful- ly 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.
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 further guidance.

To be eligible for the program, Personal banking, Business or Corporate banking clients 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 may be excluded from this program.

The relief program is intended to provide financial relief and help clients manage their accounts until 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, and address them within the range of the banks’ available tools.

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 distress, 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.”

Minister of Education Jeffrey Lloyd announced that despite schools being closed on March 15, 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 the havoc 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 possible, they are required to report to school management, the school authority, to secure the register of their students while secure distance learning materials and to create such groups with the assistance of the school’s management director and the director of education.”

Mr. Lloyd said that the virtual platform for learning, which was launched in September 2019, is currently being upgraded and will be able to accommodate 100,000 students by March 23. About 50 teachers have been trained for this platform.

If a h a m a a T e l e c o m m u n i c a t i o n s Company (BTC) is also set to provide a learning platform for the Ministry of Education to continue students’ education.

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, if parents have heard, we will consider a number of options; all hands are on deck, which means every one 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 print-ed for their children.
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 exhausting at times and the economic effects dark, by working together today we will weather the struggles of the Bahamians are resilient. We have faced desperate challenges before and we will weather the struggles of tomorrow together.

Prime Minister Minnis Calls for Unity to Overcome Crisis

Man Accused of Murder

The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authorities (URCA) is the independent regulator of the Electronic Communications sector comprising Broadband, cable television and telecommunications services in The Bahamas. URCA’s mission is “Improving life through effective utilities regulation.”

URCA is working 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 the effective and efficient management of the organization, personnel and financial resources. As the CEO is an executive member of the Board, the CEO shall be accountable to the Board for the performance of the organization.

The CEO is based in The Bahamas, and is responsible for the following:

- Provide leadership and direction for the URCA workforce.
- Oversee the development and implementation of strategic objectives.
- Oversee the development and implementation of annual budgets.
- Oversee the establishment of effective and efficient operational processes.
- Oversee the development and implementation of policies and procedures.
- Oversee the development and implementation of quality assurance programs.
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