

SPECIAL EDITION

**FREE
DISTRIBUTION**

COVID-19 UPDATE



GUYANA

March 11, 2020

CONFIRMED
CASES

31

DEATHS

4

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Persons Tested | 115 |
| Persons in Institutional Quarantine | 35 |
| Persons in Institutional Isolation | 23 |
| Persons on Home Quarantine | 157 |
| Recovered | 8 |

As at April 6, 2020

www.crushcovid.gov.gy

Coronavirus COVID-19

IF YOU HAVE FEVER AND/OR COUGH YOU SHOULD STAY AT HOME

How to Prevent



Wash

your hands well and often to avoid contamination



Cover

your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing and discard used tissues



Avoid

touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands



Clean

and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces



Stop

shaking hands or hugging when saying hello or greeting other people



Distance

yourself at least 2 meters(6ft) away from other people, especially those who might be unwell

Symptoms

- **Fever**
- **A Cough**
- **Shortness of Breath**
- **Breathing Difficulties**

All people are advised to:

Reduce social interactions

Keep a distance of 2m between you and other people

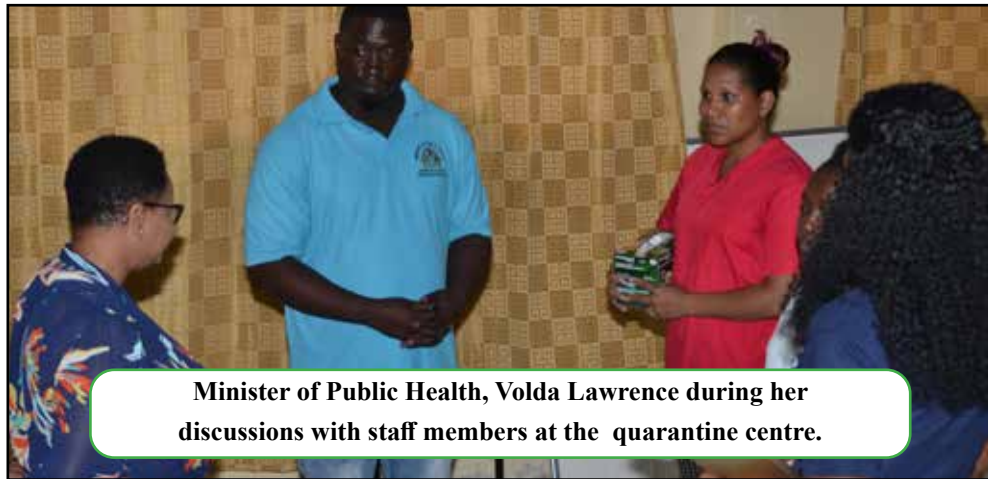
Do not shake hands or make close contact where possible where you have symptoms contact the

For daily Updates Visit
dpi.gov.gy/covid19

COVID-19 Hotline - 231-1166
226-7480 | 624-6674 | 624-2819
624-3067



SPECIAL EDITION COVID-19 UPDATE



Minister of Public Health, Volda Lawrence during her discussions with staff members at the quarantine centre.

Min. Lawrence visits quarantine centre

By Kellon Rover

Minister of Public Health, Hon. Volda Lawrence has emphatically reiterated Government's commitment to ensuring that every citizen who is currently quarantined receives adequate health care.

Making good on this promise, the Public Health Minister made an impromptu visit to one of the quarantine centres, where she hosted separate discussions with the staff members and residents at the facility.

The centre houses approximately 20 individuals, most of whom travelled home recently from Barbados.

During her engagement with the group, Minister Lawrence reiterated that the COVID-19 pandemic is not to be taken casually and it requires the aid of every Guyanese to be contained.

Referring to the negative comments on social media, the Public Health Minister said the intensity of the global epidemic requires full cooperation and should not involve politics.

"The Ministry of Public Health is being led by myself and team and for us, this is about life and death, not politics. This disease does not come and ask you which party you belong to or who you voted

for," Minister Lawrence remarked.

She pointed out the importance of being quarantined, noting that the decision taken by the authorities will benefit both the individuals and their families.

Persons at the institution will be quarantined for 14 days and will undergo a thorough assessment by medical officials at the site. Once no symptoms are detected, the patient will be discharged.

Minister Lawrence said a separate location is prepared for persons who exhibit the signs and symptoms matching COVID-19.

Addressing the employees, Minister Lawrence said it is important for every employee at the quarantine facility to practice social distancing and take all precautionary measures.

Doctor in charge, Terrence George disclosed that the administration is implementing every necessary system to ensure that the residents are comfortable. He said they have improved the facility since operations commenced there, and daily, new systems are being implemented.

Present too during the visit were Permanent Secretary (PS) of the Ministry of Public Health Collette Adam and Director General (ag) of the CDC, Lieutenant Colonel Kester Craig. ■

MOPH prepared to deal with 1400 projected COVID-19 cases

Delicia Haynes & Nateshia Isaacs

Guyana is expected to confirm roughly 1400 cases of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 at the end of the global pandemic.

This is according to the Pan American Health Organisation/World Health Organisation (PAHO/WHO) and was disclosed by Public Health Minister Hon. Volda Lawrence in her daily COVID-19 update to the nation.

Minister Lawrence expressed her confidence in the ministry's preparedness to handle the projected cases. She disclosed that the health ministry will have 300 isolation beds in place for persons who have been tested positive for COVID-19.

The Ministry of Health has announced that special consideration has been made for persons living with diabetics, cancer sickle cell or/and HIV/AIDS in its preparedness plan to safeguard against the further spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19)

Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Karen Boyle said, "The guidelines are the same for them, but they must take extra precautions. We are in the process of organising alternative arrangements so that they are provided with their medications without putting themselves at additional risk."

Dr. Boyle outlined that each region's health system is accommodating patients such as these. "The regions are actively working on developing a system where all patients especially those with chronic diseases and other speciality clinics can be seen. At-risk groups would not need to come out and the best mode to operate would be shared at a later date." She added

Meanwhile, it was noted that to contain and mitigate the further spread of this virus, the Ministry will be strengthening community and hospital surveillance as well as the rapid response surveillance team. ■

GUYANA HAS 31 CONFIRMED CASES OF COVID 19

By Nateshia Isaacs

The total number of confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Guyana now stands at 31 as of April 6, 2020.

Of the 31 confirmed cases, 29 are active and 4 are deceased.

This was disclosed by Public Health Minister, Volda Lawrence.

The total number of 115 persons have now been tested. Of this amount, 31 tested positive and 84 negative.

The number of persons in institutional quarantine stands at 35. The breakdown is as follow in Region Three – 3 persons; Region Four – 22 persons and Region Six – 3 persons.

Currently, 23 patients are in institutional isolation.

The Public Health Minister also revealed that three family members of Guyana's first case, who had tested positive, have since taken two pos-

it-isolation tests, which recorded a negative status for all three relatives.

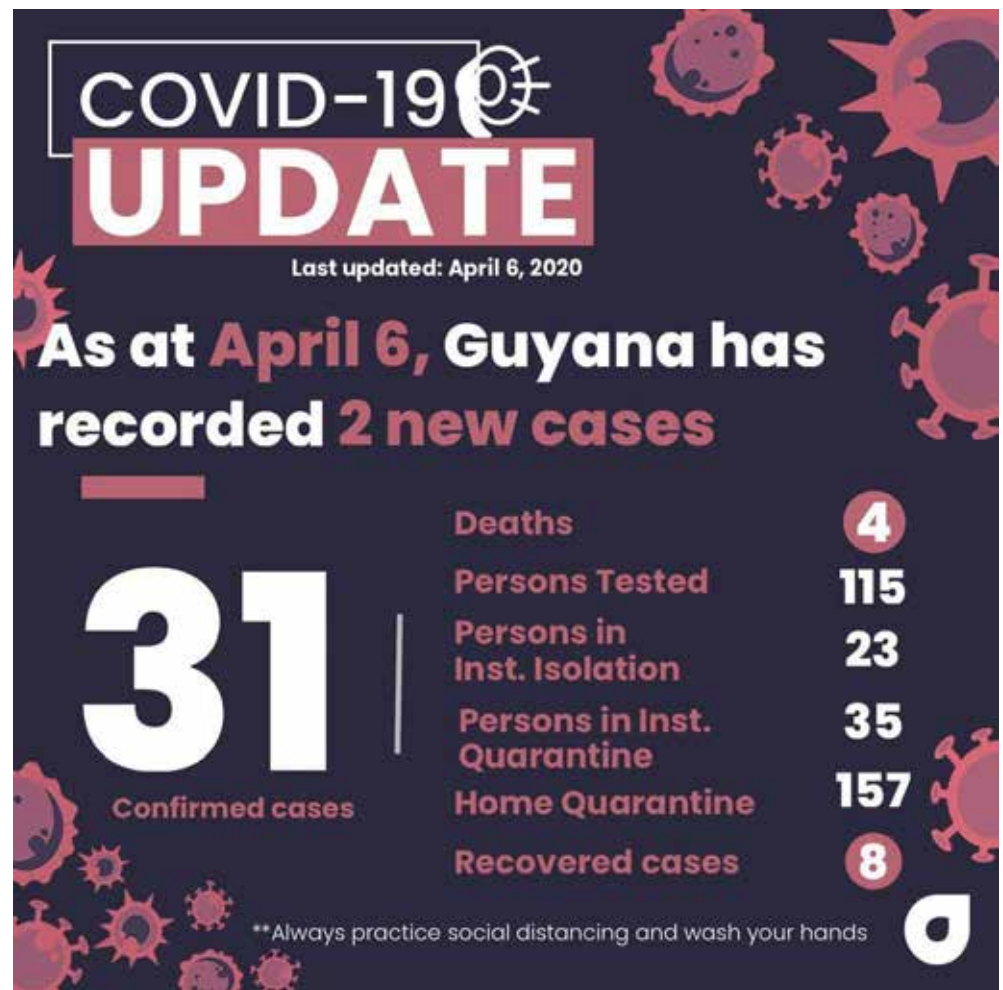
Additionally, eight persons associated with Guyana's first case have recovered after isolation.

The number of persons hospitalised in the COVID-19 ICU is eight, one of whom is critical.

Calls to the COVID-19 hotline now totals 1,495.

As of April 6, 2020, WHO records the global figure of confirmed cases at 1,133,758 while the number of deaths stands at 62,784. In the Region of the Americas, there are 315,714 confirmed cases and 8187. Deaths.

The Ministry of Public Health again called on citizens to heed the Emergency Orders put in place against COVID-19 spread. In particular, she noted that persons are not adhering to the curfew and reminded of the seriousness of the situation and underscored the need for persons to stay at home. ■



GUYANA CONFIRMS FOURTH COVID-19 DEATH

Minister of Public Health Hon. Volda Lawrence on April 1 confirmed that the total number of deaths from COVID-19 in Guyana has moved to 4.

Ms. Osa Collins, a 78-year-old resident of New Amsterdam was confirmed to have contracted COVID-19 passed at the Georgetown Public Hos-

pital Corporation. Hours later it was confirmed that a 59-year-old patient passed away at the Diamond Hospital.

The first COVID-19 death in Guyana was recorded on March 11th. The second fatality followed on March 31.

PRESIDENT GRANGER ACTIVATES MEASURES TO FIGHT COVID-19



**HIS EXCELLENCY
BRIG. DAVID A. GRANGER**

- with effect from Friday, April 3

Address to the nation
2020.04.02

Guyanese,
The Government of Guyana continues to work assiduously to combat the deadly Coronavirus (COVID-19) disease. I addressed the nation twice before (on 11th March and 28th March), detailing the policies which have been promulgated and the action which has started. This is my third address to you on this disease.

I am happy that many individuals, institutions, religious organisations and business enterprises, of their own accord, have initiated action to protect citizens and prevent the spread of this disease.

I thank all who have contributed to the fight against COVID-19 through the installation of handwashing basins, or other valuable donations.

This is as it should be; fighting the pandemic requires the continuous, collective action of all citizens and the entire country. I take this opportunity to remind you of the following actions by the Government:

- The extraordinary issue of the Official Gazette, published on 16th March 2020, aims at protecting the health and safety of all Guyanese and empowers the Minister of Public Health to take certain actions which are already in force.

- The Ministry of Public Health, together with the Civil Defence Commission, has been engaged in mobilising medical staff and marshalling the resources and equipment needed to fight this disease.

- The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) was operationalised with effect from 31st March 2020. The activation of

the NEOC is aimed at ensuring the highest level of collaboration among stakeholders and to further prevent the spread, enhance preparation and strengthen national response to the disease.

- The National COVID-19 Task Force headed by the Prime Minister and includes the Attorney General and Ministers of Public Health, Public Security, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Education, Communities, Public Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Citizenship was established on 12th March and completed a national response to the Coronavirus disease. Some of these measures will take effect from Friday 3rd April 2020.

- National quarantine and isolation facilities have been established at the West Demerara Regional Hospital; the (East Bank Demerara) Diamond Diagnostic Centre; the Georgetown Public Hospital; the (Timehri) Madewini Youth Centre; the East Coast Demerara) Ocean View International Hotel; the Cliff Anderson Sports Centre and the National Gymnasium. These facilities collectively will be able to accommodate one thousand persons.

Guyanese,

I iterate the need for all citizens, in all parts of the country, to adopt the many advisories that have been issued by the Ministry of Public Health and the National Task Force, including:

- Avoidance of leaving home;
- Avoidance of gatherings of more than five persons;
- Avoidance of visiting sick persons;
- Avoidance of touching other persons;
- Avoidance of touching parts of your own faces; and
- Washing of hands frequently and thoroughly in water.

COVID-19 is a global pandemic for which there is no vaccination or cure. At the individual level certain measures are absolutely necessary to reduce the spread of this disease.

It is now clear that several other measures must be put in place to keep the public safe. The 'National Response' to the Coronavirus 2019 has been crafted and a draft has been disseminated. The objectives of this 'Response' are to:

- protect the health and safety of the Guyanese people;
- protect vulnerable persons in special-care homes and shelters;
- prevent community spread to local and hinterland areas;
- reduce or mitigate the spread in affected areas;
- restrict or halt imported cases into the country;
- restrict and contain the spread of the disease in heavily-populated areas;
- ensure on-the-job safety of all medical and technical staff;
- reinforce measures to mitigate the social and economic impact on the livelihood of vulnerable persons; and
- coordinate the efforts of civic and non-governmental organisations.

Several measures aimed at limiting social contact are already in force:

- The University of Guyana's campuses and other schools have been closed;
- National Grade Six Assessment (NGSA) has been postponed and new dates will be announced;
- The Cheddi Jagan and the Eugene F. Correia International airports have suspended operations until May 2020;
- Seaports have been closed to international vessels except merchant ships from 21st March 2020;
- Travel to countries which border

Guyana has been suspended;

- Public Servants have been placed on a rotational shift system of duty;
- The Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA) has waived the Value Added Tax (VAT) on medical supplies associated with the testing, prevention and treatment of COVID-19; and
- Visitation at the Palms Geriatric Home; the Night Shelter; New Opportunity Corps; and the Hugo Chavez Rehabilitation and Reintegration Centre has been suspended until further notice.

The measures that have already been implemented will remain in place until further notice.

Guyanese,

In light of the increasing number of confirmed cases of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Guyana, and the number of projected cases, a meeting was held with partners from international and non-governmental organisations to coordinate the planning of mitigative and preventative actions against the short- and long-term impacts of the virus on all sectors of the country.

Guyana is not alone in fighting this pandemic.

The Government, in order to strengthen containment measures, will close public gathering at places of entertainment, including bars, clubs, gymnasiums, night clubs, restaurants and swimming pools, between the hours of 18:00 hours and 06:00 hours (6:00 pm and 6 am) with effect from midnight (23:59 hours) on Friday 3rd April 2020.

Additional restrictions to safeguard public health will be announced from time to time as the needs arise. ■

Nationwide COVID-19 curfew for one month

The Minister of Public Health, Volda Lawrence has issued emergency measures under the direction of HE David Granger to contain the spread of the Novel Coronavirus in Guyana.

It will be in effect from April 3 to May 3, 2020. These measures, among other things, supervised the implementation of a 6pm to 6am curfew while

only catering for the operations of essential services on a 24-hour basis.

Minister Lawrence confirmed that telecommunications and media are considered "essential services".

It also speaks to social distancing protocols for those services which will continue to operate

during this period.

With these emergency measures now published all curfews or measures taken by town councils and village/community leaders and others are revoked except those made by the Ministers responsible for Education, Civil Aviation, Maritime, Immigration and Finance.



Minister of Public Health,
Hon. Volda Lawrence

COVID-19 EMERGENCY MEASURES

These emergency measures are made pursuant to the paragraphs (1) and (2)(b) of the Direction by the President, given under the Public Health Ordinance, Cap. 145, and published in the Gazette, Legal Supplement B, 16th March 2020.

The measures shall take effect from the 3rd April, 2020 and last for one month unless earlier terminated, extended or amended by notice of the Minister of Public Health after an assessment of the prevailing public health conditions.

1. Restriction to home

Except as otherwise provided in this Notice every person shall remain in the confines of his or her home and its yard space.

2. Restriction on social activities

- (1) No person shall host, attend or visit-
 - (a) a private party;
 - (b) a recreational or competitive sporting event;
 - (c) a wedding, other than the bride, the bridegroom, official witnesses and the marriage officer;
 - (d) a banquet, ball or reception;
 - (e) a bar or rum shop;
 - (f) the seawall;
 - (g) a pool, creek or river;
 - (h) a wake or vigil;
 - (i) a gym;
 - (j) a beauty salon or spa;
 - (k) a club or discotheque;
 - (l) a meeting of a fraternal society, private or social club or civic association or organisation; or
 - (m) any other social activity.

(2) No water sports or recreational activities shall be allowed on any river, creek and internal waters.

(3) No more than ten mourners, one officiant and the funeral director and the necessary staff shall attend a funeral.

3. Restriction on visitation

- No person shall visit or be permitted to visit-
- (a) any place of quarantine or an isolation facility;
 - (b) a prison or correctional facility;
 - (c) a patient in a hospital, nursing home, senior citizens' home or any other care facility.

4. Curfew

A curfew is hereby imposed throughout Guyana from the 3rd April, 2020 to 3rd May, 2020

between the hours of 6:00pm and 6:00am.

5. Public Service, Statutory Bodies and State-owned Enterprises

All persons employed within the public service, a statutory body or a State-owned enterprise shall work remotely from home, except as may otherwise be directed by the Minister of Public Health acting on the advice of the responsible Ministers and Heads of Agencies.

6. Essential Services

(1) Subject to subparagraphs (2) and (3), all services shall remain closed except for the following essential services which may carry on operations for 24 hours-

- (a) hospitals, healthcare and medical services including pharmacies, drug stores and private veterinary services;
- (b) nursing homes, orphanages, shelters and other related care centers;
- (c) immigration;
- (d) the Revenue Authority;
- (e) electricity services;
- (f) water supply services;
- (g) the disciplined forces;
- (h) prison services;
- (i) solid waste management, sewerage and janitorial services;
- (j) air traffic control;
- (k) Demerara Harbour Bridge and Berbice River Bridge;
- (l) hotels and accommodation;
- (m) factories, manufacturers or distributors of food supplies and essential goods including medical supplies where the Minister of Public Health has determined that the continuation of these operations do not pose a risk to public health.

(2) The following services may be open between 6:00am to 5:00 pm-

- (a) banks;
- (b) markets, supermarkets, fruits and vegetable stalls and neighbourhood shops;
- (c) food services and restaurants only for delivery, drive thru and take away services;
- (d) gas stations.

(3) Any service not listed in subparagraphs (1) and (2) may only continue their services if their employees can work exclusively from home.

7. Social distancing and physical distancing protocols.

Any service mentioned under paragraphs 5 and 6 shall make the necessary arrangements to facilitate social and physical distancing and shall-

- (a) ensure that all staff and other persons maintain physical distancing of at least six feet in or outside of their establishment, if in a line to enter the establishment;
- (b) determine the number of persons that may be permitted in the establishment at any one time by permitting one person for every thirty square feet of store space;
- (c) place distance markers at least six feet apart, indicating where each customer shall stand on a line at a check out point or other line;
- (d) place distance markers at least six feet apart on the outside of the establishment, indicating where customers shall stand while waiting to enter the establishment.

8. Religious Worship

- (1) Except for the conduct of funeral services and weddings, all churches and places of religious worship including mosques and temples shall be closed.
- (2) Subparagraph (1) does not prohibit any religious worship by virtual or electronic means provided that if virtual or electronic worship is being carried on in the place of worship the number of persons in that place shall not exceed five persons and the social distancing of six feet between persons shall apply.

9. Domestic Travel

- (1) Any person who provides transport within Guyana whether by land, water or air shall not carry in that transport more than half the number of passengers which the motor vehicle, vessel or aircraft is licensed to carry and the operators and passengers of any motor vehicle, vessel or aircraft shall have personal protective equipment.
- (2) A motor vehicle, vessel or aircraft shall not be used for a purpose other than a purpose related to a service under paragraphs 5 and 6.
- (3) The Police Force shall have powers to stop any motor vehicle, vessel or aircraft and inquire as to the purposes for which that motor vehicle, vessel or aircraft is being utilised, and may arrest anyone found in violation of this paragraph.
- (4) Medical evacuation flights shall be allowed with only the patient, one health official and, where necessary, one family member.

10. International Air Travel

The Cheddi Jagan International and Eugene F. Correia International Airports shall remain closed to all international flights except for outgoing flights, cargo flights, medical evacuation flights, technical stops for fuel only and special authorised flights.

11. Offence

Any person who fails to comply with any of these measures commits an offence under section 152 of the Public Health Ordinance and is liable on summary conviction to the penalty provided under that section.

12. Revocation

All curfews or measures taken under any law or administratively are revoked except those made by the Ministers responsible for Education, Civil Aviation, Maritime, Immigration and Finance.

Made this 3rd day of April, 2020.

Offence under the Public Health Ordinance

Any person who fails to comply with any of these measures (emergency) commits an offence under section 152 of the Public Health Ordinance and is liable on summary conviction to the penalty provided under that section.



Prime Minister, Moses Nagamootoo

CLARIFICATIONS MADE ON EMERGENCY ORDERS ISSUED FOR COVID-19

By Delicia Haynes

Chairperson of the National COVID-19 Task Force, Prime Minister, Moses Nagamootoo sought to clarify different aspects of the emergency order issued by the Minister of Public Health on April 3, 2020.

Via a virtual press briefing, the Prime Minister clarified that the order is not meant to “lockdown” the productive sectors but rather is aimed at protecting the local population while containing the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

“The order is not directed at the economy, it is not directed at production, facilities can continue to operate. Telecommunications, internet services, these are communication mechanisms that are not restricted in their operations and so they are required to observe only those safety measures for their employees.”

The order mandates that a curfew from 6:00pm to 6:00am daily from April 3 to May 3, 2020, is implemented and observed. It restricts religious and social gatherings except for weddings and funerals and prevents bars, restaurants and night clubs from operating until the period ends for the order.

“Whatever measures we take are all within

the confines of health security and safety of our people to protect people from the spread of the disease, to contain it. We believe these measures could help to reduce the impact of this disease within our borders,” the Prime Minister noted.

For persons working in the essential services listed in the order, he explained the measures are meant to protect them as traverse to and from work. To prevent clustering in place such as “bus parks, stelling and other places of where social activities occur.”

Meanwhile, those employed in these sectors deemed as non-essential are required to remain at home and only leave to go to the market, pharmacy etc. They are reminded to wear a mask and practice social distancing once outside.

“Staying at home is critical in this situation... There isn’t a mandatory lockdown as it were; supermarkets, fruits and vegetable stalls these are open from 6am to 5pm so we do not want people to panic,” the Prime Minister clarified.

He noted that the measures in the order are not immutable and can be changed the situation changes. However, what is in place now seeks to bring about compliance to the many advisories issued, encouraging the general public to do their part in ensuring the virus spread is contained early. ■

MOPH LOOKING TO HOUSE COVID-19 HEALTH WORKERS

By Nateshia Isaacs

Primary Healthcare workers who deal with critical COVID-19 patients may soon be provided with temporary housing and transportation solutions by the Public Health Ministry.

According to Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Karen Boyle, this will reduce the likelihood of family members of the nurses, doctors and other attendants contracting the virus.

Health sector employees have faced stigma since the beginning of the outbreak in Guyana. They faced great difficulty accessing public trans-

portation, taxis and while shopping at supermarkets and pharmacies.

As such, the Public Health Ministry will be providing necessary support to these persons.

The Ministry also announced today that it is working assiduously to have the necessary lab equipment available as soon as possible to increase the number of COVID-19 tests being done.

Just recently PAHO/WHO donated 1100 kits to Guyana to help test persons who may have contracted COVID-19. Further, the Ministry is working to ensure that a stock of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) reaches all Health Facilities. ■

FORMER OCEANVIEW HOTEL IS DEDICATED COVID-19 CENTRE



Former OceanView Hotel

By Nateshia Isaacs

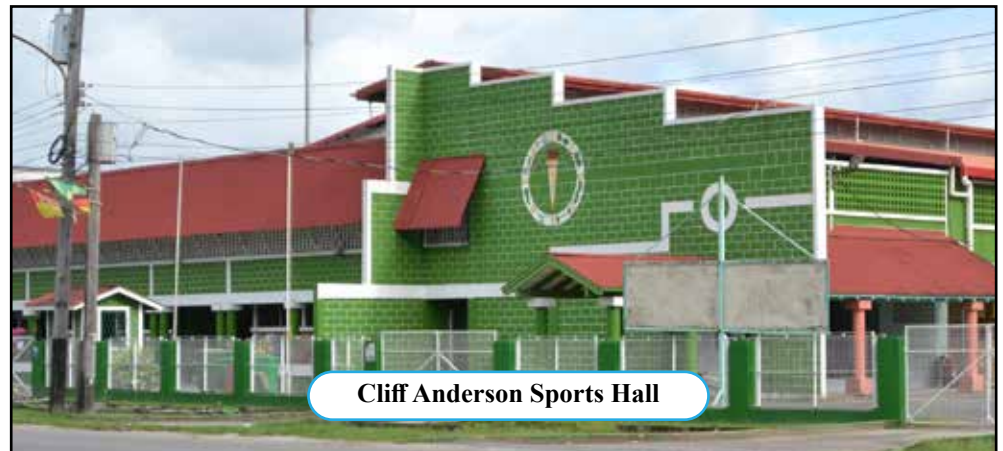
The former Ocean View Hotel located on the Rupert Craig Highway, Liliendaal will be used as a dedicated COVID-19 facility to treat and monitor patients. The facility will house 300 critical patient one it is operational.

Chairman of the National COVID-19 Taskforce (NCTF), Honourable Prime Minister Moses Nagamootoo revealed that the taskforce is preparing for all possibilities and is also looking at preparing other dedicated facilities to treat COVID-19 patients.

These facilities include the former Guyana Broadcasting Corporation building on High Street, the National Gymnasium and the Cliff Anderson Sports Hall. The various COVID-19 facilities will cater for over 1000 patients.

Other facilities being used to treat, monitor and quarantine coronavirus patients are the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, Diamond Diagnostic Centre and West Demerara Regional Hospital.

Guyana recorded its first case of COVID-19 on March 11, 2020. As of April 2, the country registered 23 confirmed cases including 4 deaths. ■



Cliff Anderson Sports Hall

COVID-19

Coronavirus

24 HOTLINE

Updated

231-1166
226-7480

624-6674
624-2819
624-3067

+ Digicel Toll-Free Numbers

180 | 181

**Always practice social distancing and wash your hands

Coronavirus communications

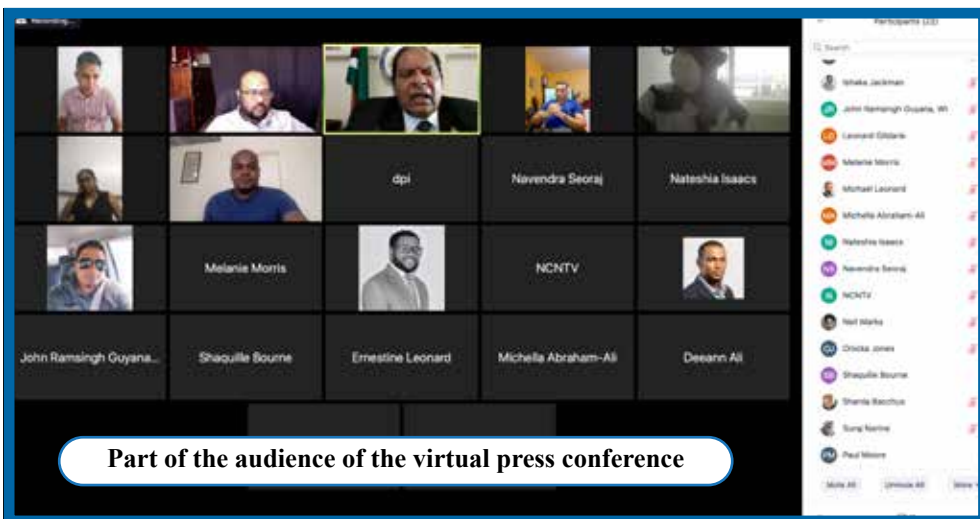
- VIRTUAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

On Saturday, April 4th Prime Minister Moses Nagamootoo, the Chairman of Guyana's National COVID-19 Task Force (NCTF) hosted the first

government virtual press conference to update the media and the public on the work of the task force. The press conference was hosted on video conferencing app Zoom and included several prominent journalists who were able to ask questions in real time. It was also streamed live online and on NCN television and radio. The marathon

press conference last for over two hours. Minister of Public Health Hon. Volda Lawrence has hosted numerous daily press conferences updating the nation of COVID-19 and has also presented several recorded and live statements on NCN and other broadcast media houses.

The Zoom app is being widely used around the world to host virtual meetings and conferences as millions of people work from home to conform with social distancing advisories. Prime Minister Nagamootoo has hosted several meetings of the NCTF using Zoom. His Excellency President David Granger also joined one of these meetings. ■



CORPORATE SOCIETY JOINS THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19



DDL Staff with some of the bottles of alcohol-based sanitising cleaner donated to the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH)

By Isaiah Braithwaite

Clearly understanding the implications of COVID-19 pandemic and that the fight against its spread cannot be won single-handedly, corporate society is playing its role in assisting the country's health care system to stem transmission.

Demerara Distillers Limited (DDL) has thus far made two large donations of their alcohol-based sanitising cleaner. The first donation of 12,000 litres saw senior citizen's homes, orphanages, night shelters, prisons, and other similar facilities benefitting.

Their second donation of 245 five-gallon bottles of their sanitising cleaner was made directly to the Health Emergency Operation Centre (HEOC).

The Guyana Telephone and Telegraph (GTT) company is also playing a critical role. Recently, GTT announced that they will offer free mobile services to healthcare workers who are on the frontline in the fight against COVID-19. The service is available to those registered

with the Medical Council and the Nurses' Association. The free mobile service will allow for the healthcare workers to make free calls to either network.

Chief Executive Officer of GTT Justine Nedd said that the service will last until the battle against the virus is over.

ANSA McAL Limited also stepped up to the plate. As a result of their generosity, medical professionals working at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) have received a boost with the provision of non-alcoholic beverages.

The donation is valued at approximately \$380,000 and consists of world-renowned brands such as Lucozade which is known for its iconic "Convalescence" heritage and Smalta which provides a great source of vitamin B.

ANSA McAL Limited said it used the opportunity to once more offer its sincerest gratitude to the GPHC for its efforts and looks forward to continuing lending its support in the fight against the spread of COVID-19. ■

For all the latest statistics, news and updates on

COVID - 19

in Guyana

visit

WWW.CRUSHCOVID.GOV.GY

US\$2B HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN FOR POOR COUNTRIES FIGHTING COVID 19

By Alexis Rodney

The United Nations (UN) has unveiled a US \$2Billion humanitarian response action plan to support poor countries that are combating the deadly COVID-19 pandemic.

The United Nations said it is gravely concerned about the impact the pandemic is having on poor countries that are already struggling with weak health systems and vulnerable populations.

During a live broadcast, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the interagency plan

brings together the World Health Organization (WHO) and other UN partners.

“Properly funded, it will save many lives and arm humanitarian agencies and NGOs with laboratory supplies for testing, and with medical equipment to treat the sick while protecting health care workers. The plan also includes additional measures to support host communities that continue to generously open their homes and towns to refugees and displaced persons.”

With only a small number of poor countries

so far reporting cases of COVID, the UN said it expects the numbers to rise. According to the Secretary General, these are countries that are already facing severe humanitarian crises.

The UN Secretary-General said the intergovernmental organization is doing its utmost to plan and respond to early recovery in countries around the world that will need the most help.

According to him, the world needs to act now to stem the impact of COVID-19 in already vulnerable humanitarian contexts. Support must also

be maintained for existing humanitarian response plans on which some 100 million people depend.

Director-General of the World Health Organisation Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said now is the time for solidarity in the face of the global threat.

“Our message to all countries is clear, back this plan politically and financially today and we can save lives and slow the spread of this pandemic.” ■

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

AVOID TOUCHING THE FACE MASK WHILE USING IT

If you do,
wash your hands with clean water and soap or lather with alcohol-based hand sanitizer for at least 20 seconds.



#mophguyana #covid19 #doyourpart

PAHO
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH
PUBLIC RELATIONS & HEALTH PROMOTION UNIT

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

HOW TO PUT ON A FACE MASK

Cover mouth and nose with mask and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask.



#mophguyana #covid19 #doyourpart

PAHO
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH
PUBLIC RELATIONS & HEALTH PROMOTION UNIT

CSEC, CAPE STUDENTS TO ONLY SIT PAPER 1 EXAMS

By Nateshia Isaacs

Students sitting the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) examinations in 2020 will do so in July in the wake of COVID-19 concerns.

All due dates have been extended by one month.

This is according to the Registrar and Chief Executive Officer of the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) Dr. Wayne Wesley who announced the revised examination strategy to the media.

Wesley noted that during these unprecedented times, offering a modified examination process is key and will allow students and administrators to remain safe during this examination season. The revised processes are subject to change depending on the COVID-19 landscape.

However, the over 50,000 students sitting

CSEC and CAPE in the Region will be administered with one common paper, referred to as Paper 1.

Final grades will be derived from this Paper 1 and the School-Based Assessments (SBAs). Private students who do not prepare SBAs will be administered with a Paper 3 (2).

Ninety percent of subject areas will be administered this way while the other ten percent is expected to be administered as per normal. This 10 percent accounts for Modern Languages, such as, French, Spanish and Portuguese), Visual Arts and Human and Social Biology (HSB).

Modern Language candidates are still expected to perform their Oral (listening, reading and understanding) examinations while Visual Arts candidates are expected to submit their journals.

Human and Social Biology does not have an SBA component so candidates will be expected to sit the Paper 2 as planned. ■

GUYOIL SLASHES FUEL PRICES

– second price reduction in less than a month

The Guyana Oil Company Limited (Guyoil) announced significant price reductions for Super 95, Gasoil, and Kerosene with effect from 6AM on April 3, 2020, as part of its relief to businesses, the public transportation network and families, as the nation battles COVID-19.

In a press release the oil company noted that, “Guyoil is cognizant that this current crisis is a reminder of the special responsibility the company has at this time. The continued supply and distribution of petroleum products is essential to peoples’ lives and business operation. It is in this context that we have taken all necessary steps to ensure the safety of our staff and customers in order to ensure business continuity.”

The new prices represent a \$71 per litre decrease for Super 95 Gasolene, a \$48 per litre decrease for Gasoil, and a \$42 per litre decrease for Kerosene. The reductions are applicable to all



GUYOIL Service Stations nationwide.

The new prices represents the company’s second price reduction in less than a month.

The most recent price reduction was announced on the 18th March, 2020, this new price reduction brings it to total of 38% discount overall. ■



HANDWASHING FACILITY INSTALLED AT STABROEK SQUARE

To increase awareness of the importance of regular hand washing to avoid possible infection and transmission of the coronavirus (COVID-19), several local businesses and agencies have installed hand washing facilities at the entrances to those places of business. The Rotary Club of Georgetown Central partnered with Guyana Water Incorporated to install a hand washing station at the Stabroek Market Square.

Since the installation DPI, visited downtown Stabroek and sure enough, citizens who were out and about expressed appreciation for the initiative.

Nearby vendors related that the handwashing station proved to be very convenient to them as well as shoppers and bus and taxi drivers who traverse the area daily, and who all dread contracting COVID 19.

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Communities, Emilie MccGarrel said that ministry will be installing foot operated tabs at public places

During this pandemic, here is a cheap and easy way to prevent the spread of the virus; wash your hands frequently with soap and water. But remember a quick scrub and a rinse is not enough.

Here is how it should be done:

- Wet hands with running water
- Apply enough soap to cover wet hands
- Scrub all surfaces including back of hands, between fingers and under nails - for at least 20 seconds to ensure full coverage.
- Rinse thoroughly with running water
- Dry hands with a clean cloth or single-use towel. ■



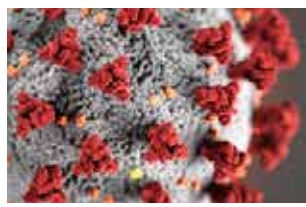
SANITIZATION EXERCISE CARRIED OUT ON CITY'S MARKETS

Georgetown Municipality in collaboration with the Guyana Fire Service and Guyana Prison Service carried out a sanitization exercise at

Bourda and Stabroek Markets.

See pictures from the exercise below





SCENES FROM THE CDC'S COVID-19

The Civil Defence Commission's (CDC) National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) has begun distributing food and sanitation items to vulnerable communities. The house-to-house exercise will last during the one month of emergency measures implemented by the Ministry of Public Health. Guyanese are urged to be on the lookout and shared the CDC's strategy to practice social distancing amid the house-to-house distri-

bution. The representative of CDC, military personnel and volunteers will blow the horn in front of the homes, and place the supplies at the gates. When the CDC team have moved, resident can proceed to collect the supplies. Below are scenes from the distribution exercise in Plastic City, West Coast Demerara and Tiger Bag and Lombard Street, Georgetown



FOOD HAMPER DISTRIBUTION EXERCISE



How to stay healthy and avoid the spread of COVID-19

Social Distancing



Maintain a distance of (3-6ft).
Avoid close contact with others

How to stay healthy and avoid the spread of COVID-19

Cover Mouth



Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing



How to stay healthy and avoid the spread of COVID-19

Hand Washing



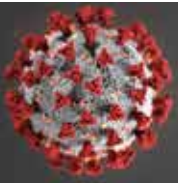
Wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds

How to stay healthy and avoid the spread of COVID-19

Self-quarantine



Stay home when sick



SPECIAL EDITION COVID-19 UPDATE

DO'S AND DON'TS

WHEN USING THE STAIRS AVOID USING THE HAND RAIL

DO'S

DON'TS



WHEN OPENING DOORS AVOID USING DOOR HANDLES



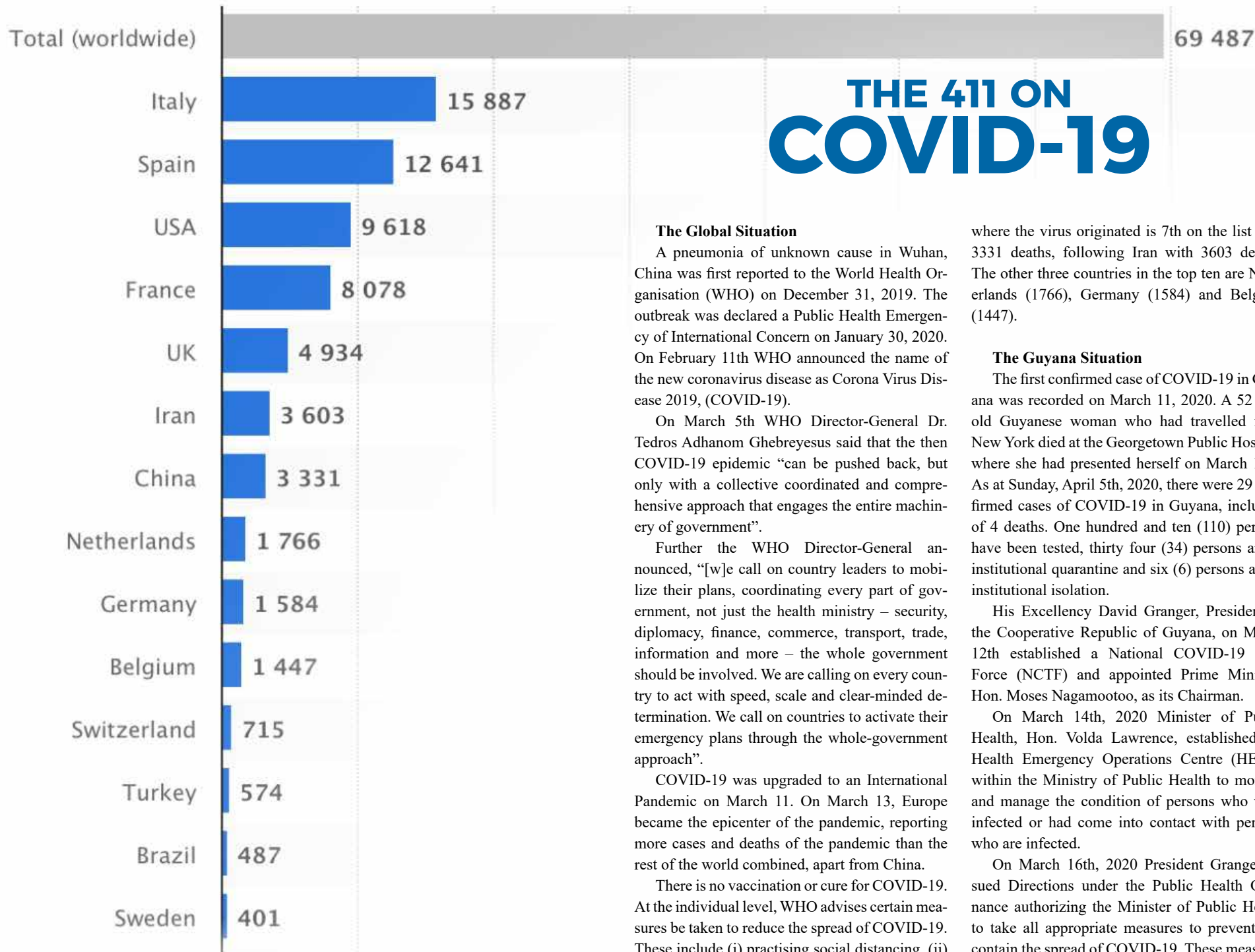
AVOID HANDSHAKES. GREET EACH OTHER BY TOUCHING ELBOWS



MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING. KEEP A DISTANCE OF 6 FEET BETWEEN YOU AND OTHERS



Coronavirus



THE 411 ON COVID-19

The Global Situation

A pneumonia of unknown cause in Wuhan, China was first reported to the World Health Organisation (WHO) on December 31, 2019. The outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on January 30, 2020. On February 11th WHO announced the name of the new coronavirus disease as Corona Virus Disease 2019, (COVID-19).

On March 5th WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that the then COVID-19 epidemic “can be pushed back, but only with a collective coordinated and comprehensive approach that engages the entire machinery of government”.

Further the WHO Director-General announced, “[w]e call on country leaders to mobilize their plans, coordinating every part of government, not just the health ministry – security, diplomacy, finance, commerce, transport, trade, information and more – the whole government should be involved. We are calling on every country to act with speed, scale and clear-minded determination. We call on countries to activate their emergency plans through the whole-government approach”.

COVID-19 was upgraded to an International Pandemic on March 11. On March 13, Europe became the epicenter of the pandemic, reporting more cases and deaths of the pandemic than the rest of the world combined, apart from China.

There is no vaccination or cure for COVID-19. At the individual level, WHO advises certain measures be taken to reduce the spread of COVID-19. These include (i) practising social distancing, (ii) regular thorough washing of hands and (iii) for persons to avoid touching their faces.

As at Sunday April 5th, 2020 there were 1,272,115 confirmed cases of COVID-19 globally and 69,374 deaths across the world with the top five countries registering the highest number of deaths being Italy (15,887), Spain (12,641), USA (9,619), France (8,078) and the UK (4,934). China,

where the virus originated is 7th on the list with 3331 deaths, following Iran with 3603 deaths. The other three countries in the top ten are Netherlands (1766), Germany (1584) and Belgium (1447).

The Guyana Situation

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Guyana was recorded on March 11, 2020. A 52 year old Guyanese woman who had travelled from New York died at the Georgetown Public Hospital where she had presented herself on March 10th. As at Sunday, April 5th, 2020, there were 29 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Guyana, inclusive of 4 deaths. One hundred and ten (110) persons have been tested, thirty four (34) persons are in institutional quarantine and six (6) persons are in institutional isolation.

His Excellency David Granger, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, on March 12th established a National COVID-19 Task Force (NCTF) and appointed Prime Minister, Hon. Moses Nagamootoo, as its Chairman.

On March 14th, 2020 Minister of Public Health, Hon. Volda Lawrence, established the Health Emergency Operations Centre (HEOC) within the Ministry of Public Health to monitor and manage the condition of persons who were infected or had come into contact with persons who are infected.

On March 16th, 2020 President Granger issued Directions under the Public Health Ordinance authorizing the Minister of Public Health to take all appropriate measures to prevent and contain the spread of COVID-19. These measures include isolation and quarantining of persons who have been exposed or have come in contact with positive cases.

WHO projects that approximately 20,000 persons of Guyana’s population of approximately 750,000 are likely to become infected. The vast majority of COVID-19 patients recover fully and completely. ■

– WHAT WE KNOW

Coronaviruses are a category of viruses defined by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as viruses which are found in various species of animals. While it is rare for coronaviruses to spread from animals to humans, this form of transmission did occur with MERS and SARS.

There are seven (7) coronaviruses that have affected humans:

- 229E (Alpha Coronavirus)
- NL63 (Alpha Coronavirus)
- OC43 (Beta Coronavirus)
- HKU1 (Beta Coronavirus)
- MERS-CoV (Beta Coronavirus)
- SARS-CoV (Beta Coronavirus)
- 2019-nCoV (2019 Novel Coronavirus)

Coronaviruses 229E, NL63, OC43 and HKU1 are the most common strains which affect humans.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

COVID-19 symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath resulting in mild to severe illness and death in some cases. The COVID-19 symptoms generally manifest within two (2) to fourteen (14) days after exposure.

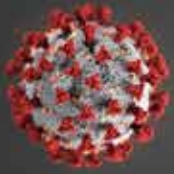
HOW IS COVID-19 SPREAD?

COVID-19 is spread by person to person interaction where respiratory droplets from an infected person caused by a sneezing or coughing come in contact with another person. There are also some reports that COVID-19 has been transmitted by air but this appears to be rare.

GLOBAL RECORD OF PANDEMICS

| Year | Type of Disease | Impacted Country | Number of Deaths |
|-----------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1918 | Spanish Influenza | Global | 50 million |
| 1957 | Asian Influenza | Global | 2 million |
| 1968 | Hong Kong Influenza | Hong Kong | 1 million |
| 1997 | Hong Kong Influenza | Hong Kong | 6 |
| 2002/2003 | SARS-CoV | Global | 774 |
| 2004 | Influenza | Thailand & Vietnam | 35 |
| 2007 | Avian Influenza | 11 Countries | 166 |
| 2009 | H1N1 (Swine Flu) | Global | 123,000 – 575,000 |
| 2012 | MERS-CoV | Saudi Arabia | 912 |
| 2014 | Ebola | Africa | 11,000 |
| 2019 | COVID-19 | Global | 69,487* |

*As at April 5, 2020



COVID-19 AND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

– WHAT YOU CAN DO TO KEEP YOUR MENTAL HEALTH INTACT DURING THIS PERIOD

By Delicia Haynes

With the emergence of the novel coronavirus here in Guyana and alarmingly growing numbers around the world, it is quite normal, natural and expected that anxiety rises, people get worried and emotional.

This is according to the Ministry of Public Health's Mental Health Unit Director, Dr. Util Richmond-Thomas.

Dr. Richmond-Thomas noted that while everyone has been affected psychologically by the pandemic, to effectively win the battle against COVID-19, one must maintain a state of mental health which is sufficient to allow them the resilience to successfully come through to the end of this pandemic.

In this regard, she made recommendations in keeping with those of the World Health Organisation (WHO) that will help alleviate the stress and worry that comes with the presence of COVID-19.

WHO has outlined specific recommendations for the general public, the elderly, those with disabilities, healthcare workers and children.

Chief among these was that persons should ensure they have someone to talk to about their feelings and their thoughts. That someone can be a family member, friend, health care provider, mental health specialist or a religious leader.

"The psychological relief gained by doing so will be tremendous," Dr. Richmond-Thomas said.

"It is also important to connect daily with those persons who are 'in your corner', those who support you, empower you and make you feel good about yourself." She further explained.

Added to this, persons should maintain their

social networks, while maintaining social and physical distancing. Technology has proven to be a major 'make-up' providing thousands to connect through various social media platforms and virtual communication.

Persons are also encouraged to keep occupied by rediscovering hobbies and doing things you love. Also, minimise psychological trauma by limiting the amount of COVID-19 news they expose themselves to.

Dr. Richmond-Thomas advised: "do not overload with the bad news. Each exposure to bad news inflicts psychological trauma and several episodes of trauma per day adds up and will be harmful."

Exercise is also an important way to reduce stress as it can result in reduced tension and relaxation, deep breathing is also quite calming. Seven to eight hours of sleep per night is also essential along with a balanced diet and drinking lots of water daily.

Persons who have tested positive for COVID-19, have undergone psychosocial support as a part of their recovery process. Their families also underwent the process.

It was recently highlighted by the Minister of Public Health Hon. Volda Lawrence that relatives, healthcare workers and those generally working frontline also require psychosocial support due to the mental toll caring for those with the virus as well as stigma and discrimination has on them.

Minister Lawrence called for an end to the unfair treatment and urged that everyone throws their support behind those working to save and protect lives. ■

THE CDC IS LOOKING FOR LOCALLY PRODUCED MASKS!

SAMPLES RECEIVED WILL BE INSPECTED TO ENSURE THAT IT CONFORMS WITH THE RELEVANT STANDARDS. CONTACT WILL BE MADE WITH PERSONS WHO MEET THESE REQUIREMENTS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION ON PRODUCTION FOR CDC.

SAMPLES CAN BE DROPPED OFF AT THE CIVIL DEFENCE COMMISSION'S OFFICE ANY DAY BETWEEN 0800HRS - 1600HRS IN SEALED PACKAGES WITH NAME AND A CONTACT NUMBER.

LOCATED ON THOMAS ROAD, THOMAS LANDS, GEORGETOWN (ING ON THE RIGHT AFTER THE GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE, BASE CAMP AYANGANA WHEN HEADING WEST).

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

MYTH



Drinking alcohol will protect you against COVID-19

FACT



Drinking alcohol **DOES NOT** protect you against COVID-19 and can be dangerous.

Frequent or excessive alcohol consumption can increase your risk of health problems.



www.health.gov.gy

#mophguyana
#covid19
#doyourpart



MOPH TO LAUNCH SELF-TESTING APP FOR COVID-19

By Delicia Haynes

The Ministry of Public Health will soon launch an App which will allow persons to self-test for COVID-19.

During an update to the nation, Deputy Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Public Health, Dr. Karen Boyle, explained that with the app, persons can test themselves for the virus, after which the information will go directly to the surveillance team.

After self-testing, persons will be contacted by the surveillance team once they fit any of the following scenarios.

- If you have travelled and during the 14 days you begin to have a cough, fever or shortness of breath
- or
- If you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 and during

14 days since that meeting you begin to have – a cough, fever or shortness of breath.

or

- If you visited a facility where COVID-19 positive cases have been identified and during the 14 days after that visit you begin to have a cough, fever or shortness of breath

"This APP will further strengthen the efforts made thus far by Ministry of Public Health to meet the needs of persons who may suspect that they have signs and symptoms of COVID-19," Dr. Boyle stated

It was noted that the health ministry is working to ensure the necessary lab equipment is acquired in the soonest possible time to increase the number of COVID-19 tests being done.

Meanwhile, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be at all key health facilities, in the eventuality that there is a suspected case that must be seen by health care workers. ■

COVID 19 | TIPS TO KEEP YOUR CHILDREN ENGAGED AT HOME

- ONLINE RESOURCES, TELEVISION, RADIO AND MORE

With the closure of schools by the Minister of Education to facilitate sanitization exercises parents and guardian may be wondering how to keep their children occupied, productive and engaged

A routine will keep you and your children feeling as normal as possible. Whether its breakfast time, study hours, outdoor yard activities, homework or bedtime, keeping routines help children to cope well during this time and lower their levels of anxiety.

The Ministry of Education has put measures in place to ensure students can continue learning while at home.

Persons can visit the Ministry of Education's website at education.gov.gy to access NGS Practice Test Papers in the four core areas. You can also tune in to Guyana Learning Channel (Channel 42/Cable 29) to access the following programmes:

Nursery-level programme
06:00hrs – 09:00hr

Primary-level programmes
09:00hrs – 12:00hrs

Documentaries
12:00hrs to 13:00hrs

Secondary-level programmes
13:00hrs – 15:00hrs

Parents and children can also to listen to the radio broadcasts of the Interactive Radio Instruction for Grades 1 – 3 dailies. The timings are:

- Grade 1- 09:30h – 10:00h
- Grade 2-10:30h – 11:00h
- Grade 3- 13:00h – 13:30h

These are also aired on the following Radio Stations: Radio Mahdia, Bartica, Essequibo, Mabaruma, Lethem and Radio Paiwomak. Parents and children can also continue to listen to Broadcasts to schools for Grade 3-6 at 13:00hrs daily on NCN Radio.

There are several online resources for students with internet access which provide fun learning in areas such as STEM, reading, fine arts, Social Studies, History, Spelling and Grammar, foreign languages and other study areas.

All of these services have been made free and easy to use with you in mind. A few of these online resources available for your children are www.amazingeducationresources.com, www.storiesaudible.com and www.pbslearningmedia.org.

For those children who love coding www.free-codecamp.org is the site for you and if you are looking to learn a new language or improve your skills, visit www.duolingo.com to get started for FREE today.

Some apps that promote online file sharing, assignments, tests and virtual classrooms include Edmodo, Zoom and Moodle, already in use by the University of Guyana.

For more educational resources and information on delivering education in emergencies and crises, visit unesco.org

SOCIAL DISTANCING: SUPENAAM BOAT OPERATORS TO REDUCE PASSENGER LOAD



Director General of the Maritime Administration Department, Claudette Rogers distributes cleaning supplies to boating operators at Parika Stelling

Boating operators that traverse the route between Parika and Supenaam have agreed to enforce social distancing on their vessels to reduce the spread of COVID-19 among passengers.

“As a safety concern, we all know the COVID-19 pandemic that is going on so we are trying to reduce the number of passengers that the vessels carry,” said Joseph Mendes a boat captain with about 20 years’ experience working on the Essequibo River.

The captain told the DPI the carrying capacity of the 5-seater boats will be limited to 14 passengers and for the 6-seater vessels, a limit of 17 passengers will be imposed. These safety measures

will take effect as of Friday, March 27, 2020, and will continue until further notice.

Meanwhile, Director General of the Maritime Administration Department (MARAD) Claudette Rogers distributed cleaning supplies and flyers detailing good hygiene measures to the boating operators at the Parika Stelling.

Noting that MARAD has taken steps to curtail the spread of COVID-19 between both international ships and international merchant vessels that enter Guyana's waters and MARAD officials, DG Rogers said the regulatory body is also focusing its efforts on vessels operating within the country's coastal and internal waters. ■

ALLERGY SYMPTOMS VS COVID-19

HOW TO SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Below is a table showing the allergy symptoms alongside COVID-19 symptoms.

| ALLERGY | COVID-19 |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Sneezing and an itchy, runny or blocked nose | Fever |
| Itchy, red, watering eyes | Fatigue |
| Wheezing, chest tightness, shortness of breath and a cough | Dry cough |
| Raised, itchy, red rash | Difficulty breathing |
| Swollen lips, tongue, eyes or face | |
| Vomiting or diarrhea | |

COVID-19 symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure while allergies occur seasonally and may range from mild to severe.

It is vital that you know the difference between the two and it is even more important to play your

role in staying safe. Wash your hands with soap and water, sanitise regularly and practice social distancing.

If you or someone you know is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, call the Ministry of

Public Health's hotline on 231-1166, 226-7480 and NOT show up at any hospital or health facility. ■

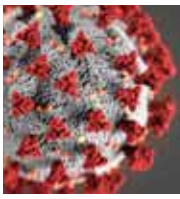
By Anara Khan

As the countries across the globe continue to tackle the rising number of confirmed cases of COVID-19, it is important to know how to differentiate between allergies and the novel coronavirus.

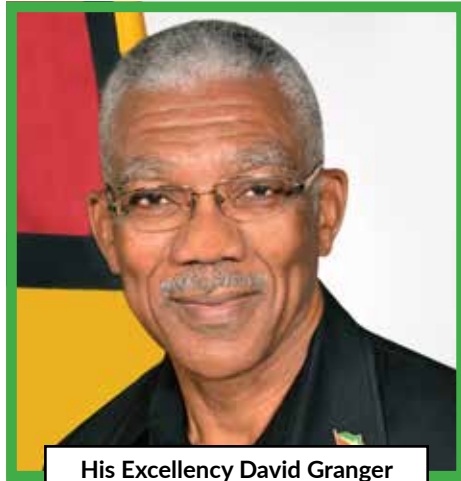
Having a runny nose and temperature does not mean you have COVID-19, however, if you do have a dry cough accompanied by fatigue and fever there is a possibility you might have the disease.

Allergy symptoms tend to be more chronic and include sneezing, wheezing and coughing. These symptoms vary and are triggered depending on the individual. People with COVID-19 may experience fever, tiredness, cough and in severe cases, difficulty breathing.

In order not to cause yourself unnecessary panic, examine your environment before assuming you're experiencing a symptom of the coronavirus. Close attention should be paid to anything that might trigger an allergic reaction.



COVID-19 TASK FORCE



His Excellency David Granger
President of the
Cooperative Republic of Guyana



Prime Minister and
First Vice President
Hon. Moses Nagamootoo
(Chairman)



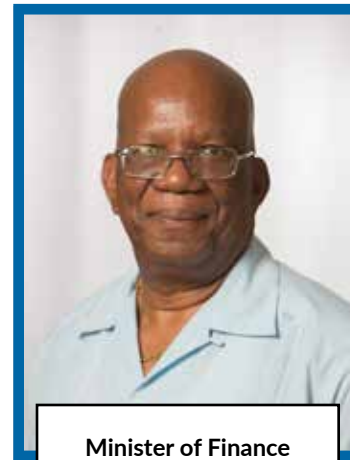
Vice President and
Minister of Public Security
Hon. Khemraj Ramjattan



Attorney General and
Minister of Legal Affairs
Hon. Basil Williams SC



Minister of Public Health
Hon. Volda Lawrence



Minister of Finance
Hon. Winston Jordan



Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hon. Dr. Karen Cummings



Minister of Education
Hon. Dr. Nicolette Henry



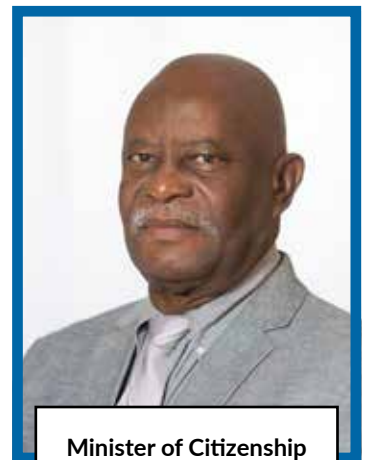
Minister of Communities
Hon. Ronald Bulkan



Minister of
Public Infrastructure
Hon. David Patterson



Minister of
Natural Resources
Hon. Raphael Trotman



Minister of Citizenship
Hon. Winston Felix



Imran Khan
Secretary



Lt. Col. Kester Craig
Technical Advisor



Deeann Ali
Coordinator

My Turn

Hon. Prime Minister
Moses V. Nagamootoo



LOCK-DOWN AND LICK-DOWN

During February, as we were winding down government business before the March 2 general and regional elections, President Granger invited the Minister of Public Health to brief Cabinet on preparations in place to deal with any outbreak in Guyana of the coronavirus disease.

The team of presenters included the indefatigable Dr. William Adu Krow, the PAHO/WHO representative in Guyana, and from whom we were for the first time being lectured on this new or novel coronavirus, styled COVID-19, which by then had claimed thousand of lives in Wuhan, China.

By then Guyana there was in place a Health Emergency Operation Centre (HEOC), a technical medical outfit that had designated a 14-bed building at the Georgetown Public Hospital for admission of Covid-19 cases.

(Later, when the Task Force was established a National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) was set up to, for example, to distribute sanitary, personal protection and relief packages).

GROUND ZERO

Then came the tragic death on March 11 of a woman from the coronavirus disease, and a red flag went up in Guyana that we have been added to the deadly danger zone.

Termed “ground zero”, that first casualty was an imported case from the United States where the Guyana-born woman and her family were living, and from where by then we had large numbers of Guyanese who returned for the Golden Republic anniversary celebrations and the follow-up General and Regional elections. There were also inflows of foreign nationals from Cuba, Brazil and Venezuela.

We had unwittingly imported many potential carriers who had come into contact with many home-based Guyanese nationals.

Within a week, Guyana closed her airspace and locked down her borders with neighbouring countries. The last international flights from North America and Europe arrived by mid-night on March 18.

STREET LIFE

The university campuses and schools were on a shut-down. Children were confined to the safety of their homes and within their yard. Government employees were placed on duty on a rotation basis, without loss of pay. Banks and other financial institutions restricted working hours, and businesses were given concessions to buy essential goods.

But life on the streets continued unabated. The markets, bus parks and bars remained crowded.

By then, we were witnessing the devastation in other countries. India imposed a lock-down and in an effort to enforce the curfew in crowded cit-

ies, police adopted an innovative campaign. They used bamboo sticks to lick down commuters on foot and on cycles who were on the streets after curfew hours.

Without having to over-populate already crowded prisons, the police gave curfew-breakers a sound trashing; held some by their ears and walked them across prohibited areas, and subjected other violators to squatting in circles and doing sit-ups.

Those measures had seemed harsh and cruel, but they worked in India. But at home, many of our people took a casual or cavalier view of the estimated 90 Advisories that were issued by both government and non-government organisations with simple and clear messages: stay at home; wash your hands!

Now, in order to deal with this “don’t-care-a-damn” attitude Volda Lawrence, the Minister of Public Health, has issued a menu of new measures – including a 6 pm to 6 am curfew – to keep people off the road.

CLUSTERING

These measures are driven primarily by concerns for public health and safety, and aim at curbing clustering of persons in all public places. They are not intended to curtail essential services or disrupt regular economic activities such as in the sugar, rice, bauxite, forestry, mining and petroleum sectors. They are not intended to restrict telecommunication, internet/telephone and media functions. These activities, including production and manufacturing enterprises, should conform to social distancing and personal protection requirements.

These measures, especially the curfew, have been applauded by the widest cross section of the Guyanese people. They would face hardships and even detriments, but they are determined to support these measures in the interest of protecting and saving lives.

These measures have been welcomed by Guyanese living in the United States of America, especially in the Borough of Queens, where the casualty rate is spinning out of control.

The fear is real, but the threat could be defeated if all of us cooperate for the safety of our Guyanese people.

It is for this reason that my column this week reproduces aspects of the COVID-19 Orders which took effect from yesterday and will remain in force until May 1.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Social activities that encourage clustering and attract person-to-person contact and possibly infection, are forbidden. These events include a private party; a recreational or competitive sporting event; a wedding, other than the bride, the bride-



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groom, official witnesses and the marriage officer; a banquet, ball or reception; a bar or rum shop; the seawall; a pool, creek or river; a wake or vigil; a gym; a beauty salon or spa; a club or discotheque; a meeting of a fraternal society, private or social club or civic association or organization.

- (a) banks;
- (b) markets, supermarkets, fruits and vegetable stalls and neighbourhood shops;
- (c) food services and restaurants only for delivery, drive thru and take away services;
- (d) gas stations.

Persons will not be allowed visits to –

- (a) any place of quarantine or an isolation facility;
- (b) a prison or correctional facility;
- (c) a patient in a hospital, nursing home, senior citizens’ home or any other care facility.

All churches and places of religious worship including mosques and temples shall be closed.

CURFEW AND DAYTIME BUSINESS

A curfew is hereby imposed throughout Guyana from the 3rd April, 2020 to 3rd May, 2020 between the hours of 6:00pm and 6:00am.

However the following services may be open between 6:00 am to 5:00 pm-

These include functions and services by journalists and the media, and telecommunication, internet, call centres and telephone agencies, though not listed as essential services but may be the subject of a variation of the Order.

DOMESTIC TRAVEL

Taxis, mini-buses, speedboats and aircraft are limited to one-half their authorised number of passengers. During any trip the operators and passengers have to wear masks.

These are not all the measures, but they suffice to show that stringent action is needed in this situation, and have been taken.

Have questions about COVID-19?
We have answers



Send hi to
+41 798 931 892
on WhatsApp



Coronavirus COVID-19

YOU HAVE THE POWER

to help prevent coronavirus by social distancing

Social distancing is one of the most effective ways to reduce the rate of infection, the impact of the virus and demand on our health services.

EVERYONE HAS A PART TO PLAY

What is social distancing?

This is a conscious effort to reduce contact between people to slow down the spread of the virus.

How can I help?



Stay

home as much as possible



Avoid

shaking hands, hugging or kissing.



Distance

yourself at least 2 meters (6ft) away from other people



Sanitise

your hands wherever possible, including when entering and leaving buildings

For daily Updates Visit
dpi.gov.gy/covid19

COVID-19 Hotline - 231-1166
226-7480 | 624-6674 | 624-2819
624-3067

Coronavirus COVID-19

KNOW THE SIGNS



High Temperature



Shortness of Breath



Breathing Difficulties



Cough

For 8 out of 10 people, rest and over the counter medication can help you feel better.

www.crushcovid.gov.gy

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