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St. Lucia Records Second Case of Coronavirus, Shuts Down All Learning Institutions

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Staff Consortium **March 15, 2020**

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ST. LUCIA — St. Lucia on Saturday recorded its second case of the coronavirus. The patient is a 53-year-old male with an active travel history with France being his last port of departure, the government made known.

The government revealed that the patient arrived in St. Lucia on Wednesday, March 11 in the company of colleagues. He entered the health care system on Friday and based on the patient's travel history and symptoms, health professionals suspected COVID-19.

The patient was placed in isolation at a medical facility and a sample was collected on the same day and sent to the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), where laboratory tests confirmed a positive result. The patient and his care team have been informed of the results.

To date, this now brings the total number of COVID-19 cases recorded in St. Lucia to two. The first case was diagnosed one day prior on Friday.

The government said a team has been dispatched to conduct contact tracing and the quarantine of contacts of the patient. This is being done to ensure that all persons who have been in contact with this individual are assessed and managed as per protocol, said the government.

All Learning Facilities Shutdown Until April 13 the Earliest

In an effort to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 and reduce the potential for transmission, the St. Lucia Department of Education, Innovation and Gender Relations, on the advice of the Ministry of Health, announced that all educational institutions on island will be closed from Monday March 16 until April 13. This coincides with the Easter break. All school activities will also be suspended, the ministry said.

Any further changes will be communicated as information becomes available, according too the ministry.

Teachers are to report to their school on Monday and Tuesday to prepare teaching and learning material to be shared with students via identified platforms/media.

Prevention Against COVID-19.

Prevention is the most effective strategy against the spread of COVID-19. The public is asked to practice the infection prevention and control measures the the government has been promoting as this is key in reducing the spread of the virus. These include:

- Frequently wash hands using soap and flowing water or when hand washing is not possible use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Cover your cough and sneeze using a flexed elbow or with tissue. Immediately throw tissue into a bin and wash your hands
- If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing seek medical care early, and share any previous travel history with your health care provider.

The Department of Health and Wellness assured the public that it is continuing focused efforts in implementing the national coronavirus plan. "We appeal to you to remain calm and to follow the advisories which we provide as we work together to maintain the health and safety of all," the department said.