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Jamaica to Deploy More Health Workers as it Prepares for Influx of Tourists June 15

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Norman Manley International Airport in Kingston, Jamaica.

JAMAICA — The Jamaica Ministry of Health will be increasing the deployment of health personnel across the island, in preparation for the reopening of the country's borders to international travelers on June 15, the government has announced.

"We are now employing another 1,000 community health aides across the country, and that will bolster the number of persons we have," said portfolio Minister, Dr. Christopher Tufton.

The health minister was at the Norman Manley International Airport in Kingston on Tuesday, where he observed the processing of 96 repatriated Jamaicans, who had arrived on a flight from Fort Lauderdale in the United States under the protocol for controlled re-entry.

In an effort to prevent an increase in imported cases of coronavirus COVID-19, the government closed Jamaica's borders to incoming passengers on March 24. The country began accepting repatriated Jamaicans on May 6 and in another six days, will commence accepting tourists.

Already, the ministry has redeployed numerous healthcare professionals to engage in screening at the ports of entry as more Jamaicans arrive in the island under the controlled re-entry protocol.

“We have had to redeploy significant resources in terms of people to conduct this exercise [testing, etc. at the airports].

“These are persons who would otherwise be doing other things in the public health system, community health aides, primary healthcare nurses, public health inspectors and doctors,” Dr. Tufton said.

He said the government anticipates that containing COVID-19 will require expanding capacity to deal with the disease and other areas of the public health system.