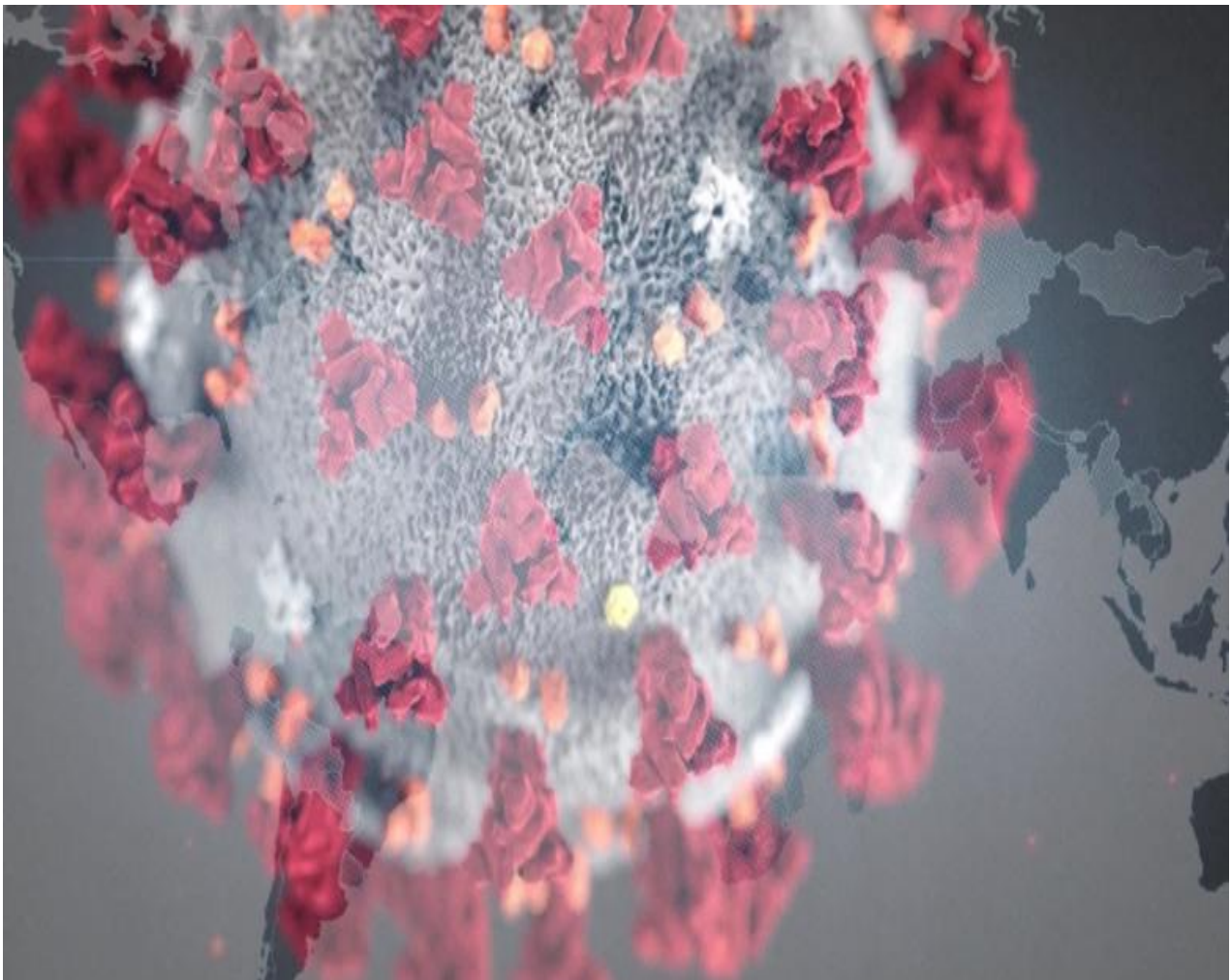


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Trinidad Confirms a Record 399 Covid-19 Cases in Single Day; Healthcare System on Verge of Being Overwhelmed, Officials Say

Coronavirus / **Published On May 07, 2021 05:12 AM /**

Staff Consortium **May 07, 2021**



PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad — Trinidad and Tobago Wednesday reported a record 399 confirmed cases of the coronavirus as health officials reiterated their warning that the country's parallel healthcare system is on the verge of being overwhelmed.

The Ministry of Health in its latest bulletin said that there had been four additional deaths, pushing the death toll since March last year to 189.

The Ministry of Health said there were 3,024 positive cases and that the total positive cases since March last year was 12,105.

The authorities said of the 399 new cases, two are recently repatriated persons and that the number of cases reported reflects the samples taken during the period May 2-4. To date, 15 people have died from the virus over the past 72 hours.

The officials said the number of people in state quarantine facilities was 204, while 2,307 are in home isolation.

Earlier, Principal Medical Officer in the Ministry of Health, Dr. Maryam Abdool Richards, said that there has been an increasing trend with respect to hospital occupancy, describing the situation as “very concerning.

“On Monday our overall hospital occupancy was 48 percent. On May 4 we saw an increase to 50 percent, and yesterday afternoon we had an increase to 58 per cent. So we’ve seen a two percent increase and then an eight percent increase, and these increases are in spite of measures to increase the capacity of hospital beds,” Dr. Richards told the Ministry of Health’s virtual news conference Wednesday.

“Our ward occupancy rates have increased within 24 hours from 50 percent to 60 percent, which is a 10 percent increase. And our ICU (Intensive Care Unit) rates have decreased from 50 percent to 40 percent,” she said, noting that the decrease in ICU rates was not due to the discharge of patients at the step-down facilities but unfortunately due to the death of patients.

“And yet again, I would like to emphasize as I did in previous conferences, that the clinical pattern or the clinical course for patients, that is how patients are treated in the hospitals and the severity of their conditions, has become worse.

“We have seen a trend in which persons with mild or less critical illness, are being hospitalized for up to five days, or somewhere between the range of three and five days. And we are seeing also that persons presenting themselves, for example to the Couva Hospital and Multi Training facility (in Central Trinidad) and to the Scarborough Hospital (in Tobago) are even more ill and are requiring ICU and HDU (High Dependency Unit) care.”

Dr. Richards told reporters that these persons are required to stay in hospital in some instances for as many as 21 days according to their latest statistics from May 1, and that it was representative in terms of the High Dependency Units occupancy, which increased overnight from 40 percent to 70 percent.

“The demand for hospital beds has been increasing. Now there are limited resources in terms of the hospital beds, and I would like to remind the population as I did on Monday, that a bed is not merely a bed.

“A bed consists of the nurses, the doctors, the supporting staff, for example lab services that have to do laboratory tests on a daily basis, the provision of personal protective equipment — the face masks, etc. Additionally, limiting factors include the medication to treat patients,” Dr. Richards added, reminding reporters also of the global supply/demand challenge for medication.

Dr. Richards said that as of May 1, the Ministry of Health activated an additional 115 beds and has also transitioned one of the hospitals from a suspected cases hospital to a confirmed case hospital.

"We are imploring the population to decrease this demand for beds by basically adhering to public health interventions," she said. "Now I know that over the last three days there has been a focus in terms of hospital occupancy levels and a concern about the number of days that we will have hospital beds for."

"Just to give you an update about this sort of concerning pattern, there are currently 542 beds available with supporting staff. And if all things are equal, meaning our staff continue at the numbers that they are continuing, that we have all the equipment in place, supportive and otherwise, that our ambulance system is not overwhelmed, which we were close to on Thursday night, we will have only 226 spaces available, which gives us seven days to full occupancy."

She told reporters that as of 9:00 am (local time) on Wednesday there were 316 patients in hospital, representing a significant increase from the previous 264 patients.

"As I indicated previously, 14 percent of persons who are confirmed as Covid positive require treatment in a hospital centre. Only six percent of those persons are discharged on a daily basis. And I would like to bring the point of the gravity of the situation in terms of the number of days that someone stays in hospital. It's not a two-day turnaround, it can be anywhere between five days and 21 days, sometimes even longer."

"At this current rate and given our hospital occupancy levels, we will run out of hospital beds or use all our hospital beds within seven days. And this really defeats the purpose of the parallel healthcare system," Dr. Richards told reporters.

"I am begging on behalf of the government, on behalf of all frontline workers who have been working tirelessly since February of last year, on behalf of the Ministry of Health and Ministry of National Security, for all members of the population to please adhere to the Covid-19 mitigation measures, please let's avoid co-mingling."

She said co-mingling and congregating are the dirtiest words in the health sector right now because the mixing and congregating of persons continue to be the main risk factor in the spread of Covid-19.

"Young people, we're seeing deaths, and sudden deaths, from the 30s onward. Please don't think you're immune. This concept of a bubble that I've been hearing touted around does not work, different persons from different households carry different exposure risks."

"Young people tend to have mild or no symptoms. You could be a carrier of Covid-19 and you will take this to your friends' home and to your friends' parents' home. Let's please avoid this congregation and co-mingling or gathering of persons," Dr. Richards told reporters.

Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Keith Rowley on Monday announced more stringent lockdown protocols to last three weeks. Only businesses deemed essential such as supermarkets, financial services and pharmacies would be allowed to operate with reduced hours. Key manufacturing and energy sectors would also be allowed to open.

© Viconsortium 2026