April 20, 2020

Press Release

TEN CONSECUTIVE DAYS OF NO NEW CASES OF COVID-19

As of April 19, 2020 the WHO reported a total of 2, 241, 778 confirmed cases of COVID-19 globally, with 152, 551 deaths. There are now 821, 860 confirmed cases in the region of the Americas. The affected countries within the region include Dominican Republic (4, 335), Haiti (44), Barbados (75), Jamaica (163), Cuba (986), Dominica (16), Grenada (13), Trinidad and Tobago (114), Guyana (63), Antigua and Barbuda (23), Saint Vincent and Grenadines (12), Martinique (163), and Cayman Islands (61).

As of April 20, 2020, Saint Lucia has a total of 15 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Of these 15 cases, 13 of them have recovered to date and have been discharged from hospital care, two of whom were repatriated to the United Kingdom earlier in April. At present, we only have two positive cases in isolation at the respiratory hospital. Our last confirmed case was reported on Friday, April 10, 2020 and since then of the 58 tests run, all have been negative for COVID-19.

Though we at Ministry of Health are heartened by these data trends, we note that this should not provide us with a false sense of security and allow us to believe that we are no longer at risk for a COVID-19 outbreak. It is our awareness of this that drives our public health team to continue to work intensively in implementing all the core components of our health sector response including testing, isolating, treatment and care, contact tracing and public education. We appeal to every individual to keep strict adherence to the infection prevention and control guidelines which continue to be issued by the Ministry of Health as these, though simple, are inexpensive and effective methods to reduce the risk for spreading COVID-19.
Saint Lucia continues on the partial shutdown and 10 hour curfew which spans the period 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. daily. We are still at a critical juncture in the implementation of the national COVID-19 response. As such, be mindful that everyone, with the exception of essential service workers, are required to remain at home unless leaving for food or medical purposes, that there should be no mass crowd events and social gatherings. These measures collectively help in achieving the physical distance required to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 within our population. The public is also advised against going to public places with flu like symptoms including fever, coughing and sneezing. When visiting the supermarket or public places, wear your home-made mask. Practice shopping first with your eyes instead of your hands; refrain from touching items unless you intend to buy them.

We continue to request that every individual practice the standard recommendations to prevent the spread of infection. These include:
- regular hand washing with soap and water or alcohol based hand sanitizer where soap and water is not available.
- cover mouth and nose with disposable tissues or clothing when coughing and sneezing.
- avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing.
- seek medical attention and share your travel history with your health care provider if you have symptoms suggestive of respiratory illness either during or after travel.

The Department of Health and Wellness will continue providing regular updates on COVID-19.

*For more information please contact the Office of the Chief Medical Officer or the Epidemiology Unit, at 468-5309/468-5317 respectively*