



Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment Announces first COVID-19 Death

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua and Barbuda – 7th April, 2020.....The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment on Tuesday announced the first COVID-19 related death in Antigua and Barbuda.

Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Rhonda Sealey-Thomas in making the announcement, said that the 48 year-old male was taken by the Emergency Medical Services to the Mount St. John Medical Centre (MSJMC) on Saturday 4th April. He was managed for complications of diabetes mellitus and because of his presentation, he was also suspected of having COVID-19 disease. She said that samples were taken on Saturday 4th April and sent to the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) for testing.

Dr. Thomas outlined that the patient's management at MSJMC included immediate stabilization but despite medical intervention, the patient passed away in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) on the same day of his admission.

The Chief Medical Officer also stated that the deceased patient's results were reported to the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment today as one of the seventeen samples sent to the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) on Monday 6th April 2020. Of the seventeen, five samples returned positive. One of the five positive results was of the deceased patient while another is a health care work and two others are hospitalized at the Mount St. John Medical Centre.

It was also reported that one of the positive results was that of the first COVID-19 patient in Antigua and Barbuda (Patient Zero). This is the third time that the young lady, who currently present no signs of COVID-19, has tested positive. Dr. Thomas said that this is a matter of concern for the health authorities and a further look will be made of her case.

To date, 57 persons have been tested for COVID-19 in Antigua and Barbuda of which 19 persons have been found to be positive while 37 have been reported as negative. Three of the 19 are health care workers and twelve have had positive travel history.

Meanwhile, Medical Director of the Mount St. John Medical Centre, Dr. Albert Duncan has reported that of the nineteen (19) COVID-19 patients, six are hospitalized at Mount St. John with four patients being respiratory dependent. The remaining COVID-19 patients are recovering at home.

Both Dr. Thomas and Dr. Duncan have reminded the public that COVID-19 disease can be spread by respiratory droplets and contact with contaminated surfaces. “Please continue to practice cough and sneeze etiquette and wash your hands frequently and hand sanitize. The public is also encouraged to follow the guidelines set out for the state of Emergency, including the curfew,” concluded Dr. Thomas. (Ends)

MAURICE F. MERCHANT

Director-General of Communications | Government of Antigua and Barbuda

Office of the Prime Minister | Queen Elizabeth Highway | St. John's | Antigua and Barbuda

T: 268.462.9766 Ext 1067 | **D:** 268.462.9766 | **F:** 268.462.3225

E: maurice.merchant@ab.gov.ag | maurice.merchant@gmail.com