

Inaugural Meeting of the ACS Multi-stakeholder Task Force on COVID-19

Lessons Learnt:1-Year Later

Presented by:
Dr. Joy St. John
Executive Director
CARPHA

8th March, 2021

Outline

COVID-19 Milestones

Value of science

Marrying public health with clinical medicine

Transcribing science into policy

Governance

2020 – Lessons learnt

Coordination-intra regional, with public health agencies, multi-sectoral

Procurement challenges

Testing

Variants

Overcoming the infodemic

Collaboration with different sectors

CARICOM-CARPHA health diplomacy

Vaccines and Vaccination

Travel and tourism in the Caribbean

Co-existing with COVID-19

CARPHA IS LEADING THE REGIONAL COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE BY:

- ☒ Strategizing with regional agencies and governments
- ☒ Conducting COVID-19 tests for Member States
- ☒ Providing COVID-19 guidelines and situation reports
- ☒ Conducting training in the correct use of personal protective equipment
- ☒ Developing protocols for reopening borders and resuming travel
- ☒ Funding vaccine procurement, supporting regulatory activities and producing risk communication to mitigate vaccine hesitancy

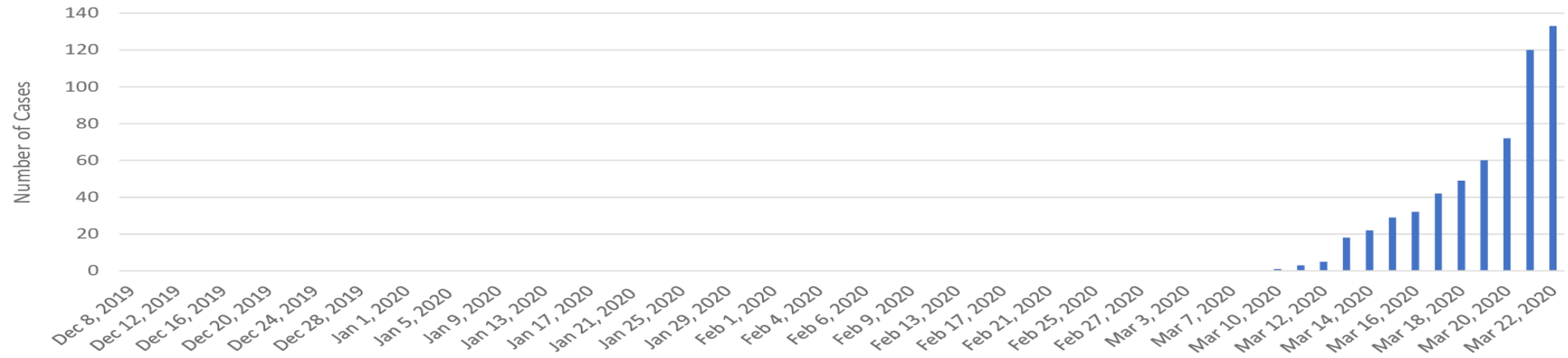
**FIGHT
COVID-19
WITH CARPHA**

Visit www.carpha.org



CARPHA and Regional Actions

Cumulative Number of Confirmed COVID-19 Cases in CMS to March 22 2020



08.12.19: Onset of symptoms in first known case of pneumonia with unknown aetiology in Wuhan City, China

01.01.20: CARPHA begins COVID-19 media releases with CMS, CDEMA, CARICOM, CTO, CHTA and other stakeholders

07.01.20: Chinese scientists identify the pathogen as a novel coronavirus

21.01.20:
- Activation of Incident Management Team-Emergency Response (IMT-ER)
- Initiation of Situation reports (SITREPs) to share with regional stakeholders

23.01.20: Procurement of laboratory supplies for diagnostic testing for SARS-COV-2

27.01.20: Development of technical documents for regional guidance

29.01.20: Assembly of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for Health Security (RCMHS)

30.01.20:
- Declaration of COVID-19 as **PHEIC** by WHO
- Risk in Caribbean: **LOW**

04.02.20: Distribution of Country Preparedness and Response to COVID-19 on Cruise Ships to CMOs

05.02.20: CARPHA's lab ready to accept specimens for diagnostic testing

06.02.20: Establishment of Expert Panel

21.02.20: Establishment of Expert Technical Advisory Group

25.02.20: Expansion of IMPACS tracking to include countries with CDC travel advisories

26.02.20: Risk in Caribbean raised to **MODERATE TO HIGH**

01.03.20: FIRST confirmed case in Caribbean region

01.03.20: Regional Response guidelines discussed by CARICOM Heads of State

05.03.20: Risk in Caribbean raised to **VERY HIGH**

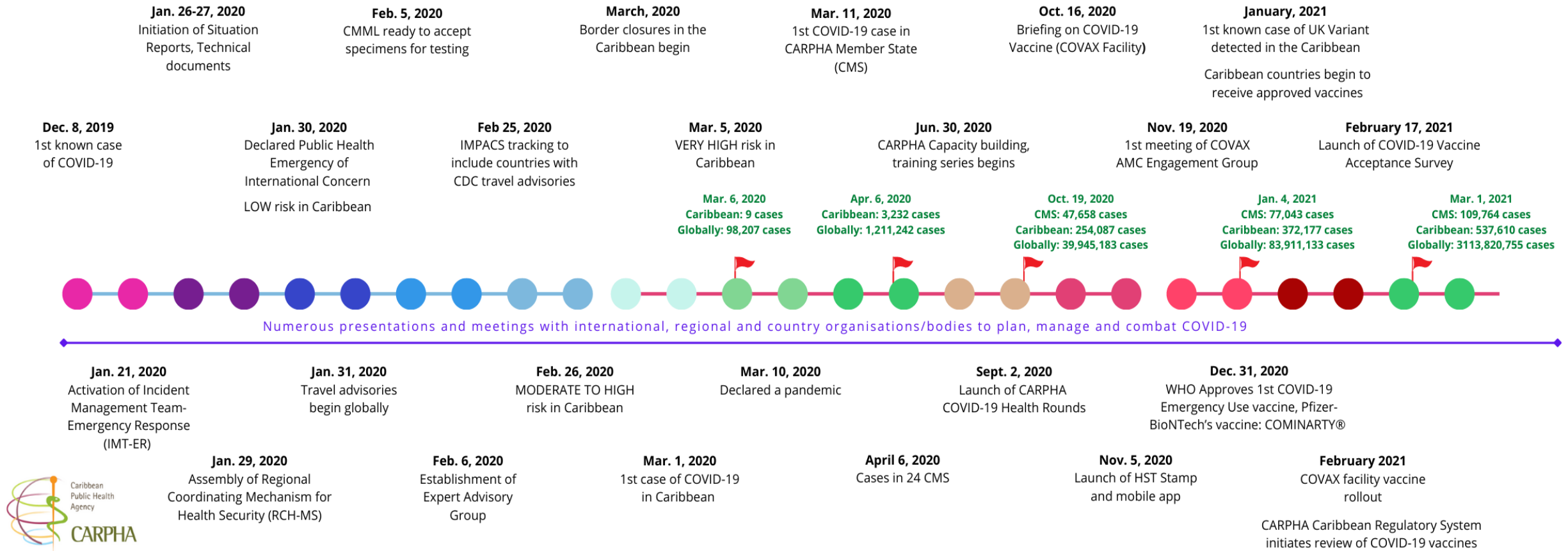
07.03.20: Discussions with Cruise Line Industry

10.03.20: Declaration of COVID-19 as a **PANDEMIC** by WHO

11.03.20: FIRST confirmed case in a CARPHA Member State

12.03.20: Updated lab protocol and case definition to include secondary cases

Major COVID-19 Milestones



Value of the science

The recommendation
for PCR testing 72
hours before
travel was based on
the science



The recommendation
for use of the face mask
by the general
public was science
based

Expert Advisory Group

- Caribbean professionals advise on Clinical Management of COVID-19
- Identified need to train Hospital Lab Technologists
- Advised on the Caribbean arm of the WHO Solidarity Clinical Trial
- Advised on the need for specific surveillance for children
- Working with the CARPHA team to create needed clinical guidelines



Marrying Public Health with Clinical Medicine



Study: MIS-C

- Preliminary findings of the second wave have highlighted atypical presentations, cardiac involvement and cases of MIS-C
- A heightened awareness and reporting of MIS-C is needed to have a better understanding of this poorly understood disease

Source: Dr. Tracy Evans Gilbert

TRANSCRIBING SCIENCE INTO POLICY

This required several layers of consensus building with the Chief Medical Officers, sister CARICOM Organizations, the University of the West Indies, OECS, PAHO and other national public health organizations before presentation to the Heads of Government in official CARICOM meetings





Governance

The Chairs of the Conference of Heads of CARICOM and the PM with responsibility for Health in the Quasi Cabinet have demonstrated the principles of equity, regional solidarity and advocacy for the rights of Caribbean people to have access to life saving vaccines.

Lessons Learnt – Coordination, Coordination, Coordination

Having a
coordinated
approach with
MS is effective

Be prepared to
adapt guidelines
as the facts
about the
disease evolve

Coordinate with
all relevant non-
health sectors

Coordinated
communication
is critical in a
fast-paced
outbreak

March, 2020



Coordination-intra and extra regional, with public health agencies, and multiple sectors



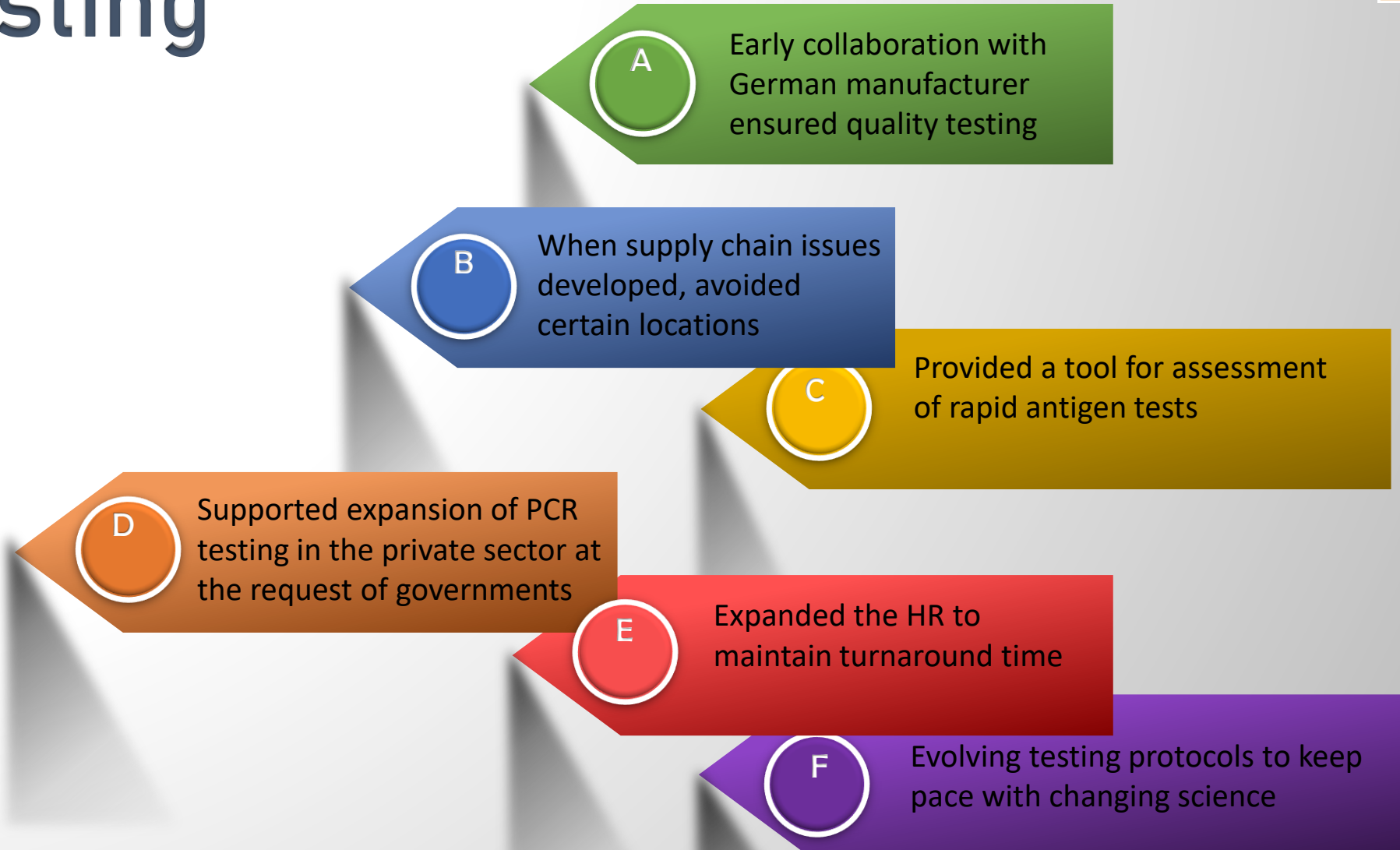
Procurement challenges

Procurement of essential resources
Constrained by supply chain, cost and access issues



- Procurement and Distribution Hub located in CDEMA
- CARICOM received donations from many governments and entities including the Jack Ma donation of COVID-19 relief supplies
- Access to AMSP secured through Dr Tedros
- CARPHA devised an allocation formula to ensure equity based on the burden of chronic disease and the age profile of MS

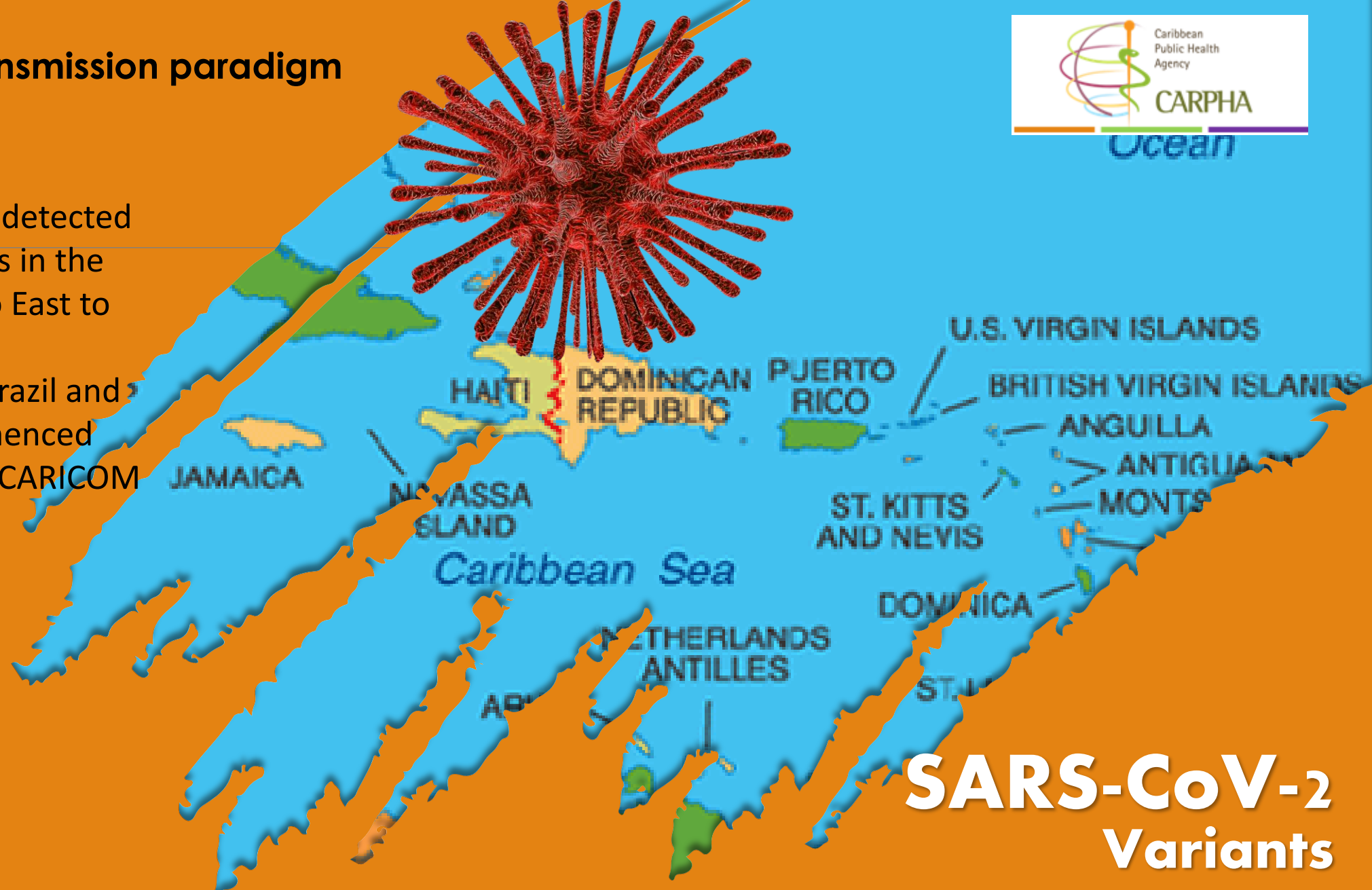
Testing



Variants change transmission paradigm in the region



- UK Variant has been detected in at least 6 countries in the region from North to East to South
- Monitoring for the Brazil and SA variant has commenced but not yet found in CARICOM



**SARS-CoV-2
Variants**



FOOD SAFETY AND COVID-19

COVID-19 is spread:
- from person to person via respiratory droplets produced by **sneezing and coughing**
- by contact with respiratory droplets left on **high touch surfaces**

COVID-19 is NOT a food borne illness.

Food handlers

- At least 20s: Ensure proper hand hygiene
- Wear and frequently change gloves
- Practice proper cough and sneeze etiquette
- Wear face masks

Food Preparation

While food is not known to spread the COVID-19 virus, the virus can land and survive on food and its packaging for some time.

Space out workstations to keep workers apart.

Practice social distancing while working as much as possible.

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CARPHA

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Updated July 3, 2020

Prevent COVID-19

- Wash your hands often and carefully with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean with an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% alcohol content (if hand or soap is not available). Avoid coughing and sneezing into your hands.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or sleeve. If tissue is not available, avoid coughing and sneezing with your hands.
- Practice social distancing (6 feet or 2 metres) between yourself and others. Avoid direct contact with anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early and share travel history with your doctor.

The Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

The virus that causes COVID-19 is a new type that has never been found in humans before.

The Symptoms

The symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- ≥37.5°C: Fever
- Dry cough
- Fatigue

ADVICE FOR PERSONS WITH SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

- Seek medical attention**
Anyone who shows symptoms of COVID-19 should seek medical attention immediately. If you are a patient with symptoms of COVID-19 and your symptoms get worse, seek additional medical attention immediately.
- Keep an eye on symptoms**
If your illness gets worse, you should call the doctor who cared for you or the emergency department where you were seen. If you have shortness of breath at rest or difficulty breathing, you should call the local emergency number.
- Wear a surgical mask**
You should wear a surgical mask when you are in the same room with other people. You should wear a surgical mask when you visit a healthcare provider. If you cannot wear a surgical mask, let your healthcare provider know before you arrive.
- Stay at home**
You should limit activities outside of your home to seeking medical care. Do not spend time in areas that you must share with others. You should not go to work, school, or public places. You should not use public transportation or taxis. You should stay at home until you are cleared by a healthcare provider.
- Cover coughs and sneezes**
You should cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze. Used tissues should immediately be placed in a bin, and hands immediately washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Wash your hands**
You should wash your hands often and carefully with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If you cannot get to soap and water and your hands look clean, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content. Do not use hand sanitizer if your hands are greasy or soiled. Wash your hands or use a hand sanitizer before and after entering an area or touching things used by other people.
- Do not share household items**
You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items with other people in your home. After using these items, you should wash them carefully with soap and water. You can use a dishwasher or washing machine. Or use soap and water to wash the items carefully by hand.
- Clean household surfaces**
Clean surfaces, such as counters, tabletops,

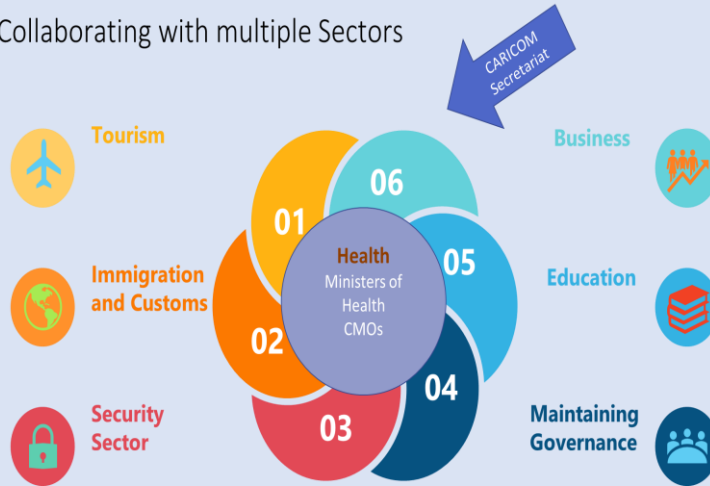
Overcoming the Infodemic

A vacuum of information makes people more susceptible to misinformation

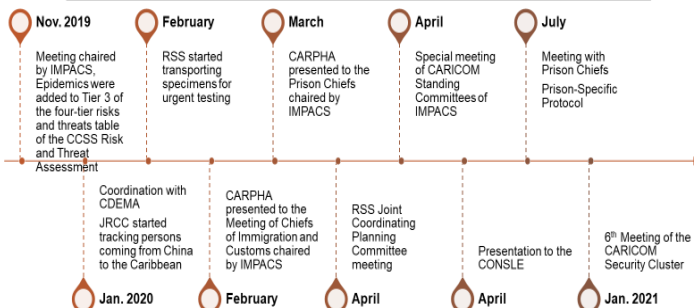
Partnership with Communication Focal Points of CMS (Regional Health Communication Network-RHCN) to develop and promote COVID-19 key messages

Collaboration with different sectors

Collaborating with multiple Sectors



Security Cluster of CARICOM's COVID-19 Response




CARPHA COVID-19 Health Rounds
Tourism 101: COVID-19 Health Measures for Reopening Tourism
Wednesday 18th November, 2020
3:00 P.M. (AST)

Presenters

- Dr. Lisa Inder**
Director, Surveillance, Disease Prevention & Control Division, CARPHA
- Ms Ornelia Cyrus**
Epidemiologist & Technical Operations Officer, Surveillance, Disease Prevention & Control Division, CARPHA
- Dr Maurice Frank**
Technical Officer, Infectious Disease Surveillance, Surveillance, Disease Prevention & Control Division, CARPHA

Partners

- Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association
- GTRCMC
- ECS

Who can attend
General Public, All Private Sector Tourism-Related Businesses: Owners, Managers, Supervisors, Directors

Certificates of Participation will be awarded upon completion of webinar requirements

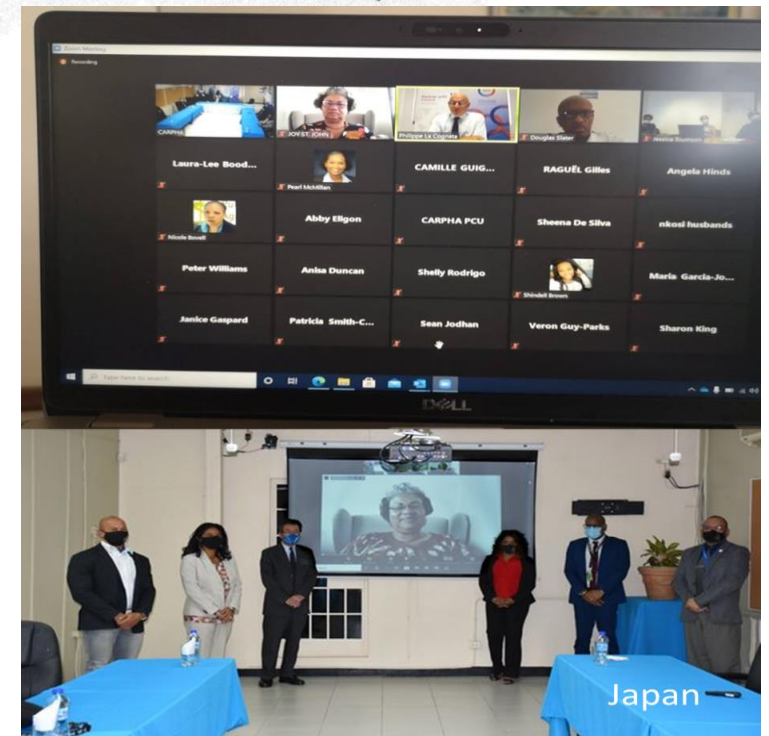
REGISTER NOW <https://member.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com/link.asp?vmlink=548159497>



The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting titled 'OECS- Education'. The main video feed displays a presentation slide titled 'COVID-19 Vaccination and the school system'. The slide content includes: 'COVID-19 Vaccination and the school system', 'Vaccination is the best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19', and 'Vaccination is safe for children under 16'. The meeting interface shows a grid of participants, including Nova Pemberton, Janice Gaspard, Dr. Gregory Julian, Nazarine Willis, Tracy Delcy, Nicari Fletcher, Agnes St John, Giannetti George, Rebecca Haskin, Carine Barrette, Jonella Giffard, Glenroy George, Bernice Khodra, Francielle Lou, Paulette Pope, Clement Vital, and Waverly Jules.

- Many sectors affected
- Need to understand the sectoral processes
- Need to communicate in the sectoral context
- Member States as well as International development partners
- Harmonised protocols
- Communication established collaboration and helps minimize duplication

CARICOM-CARPHA Health Diplomacy



Vaccines

- Rollout is led by PAHO but also supported by CARPHA
 - Vaccine regulation
 - CARPHA assisted 9 CMS with their 15% down payment to COVAX or payment through PAHO: **US\$2.2M** from EU funds
- CARPHA's Vaccine acceptance survey is ongoing



CARPHA COVID-19 VACCINE ACCEPTANCE SURVEY
CARIBBEAN PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY
Preventing disease, promoting and protecting health

Please click [HERE](#) for the Survey

Who should complete this survey:

- Persons 18 years and older
- Persons who live in a Caribbean country

As Governments roll out the COVID-19 vaccine in Caribbean states, the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) would like to provide you with accurate, science-based information on the vaccine. But to do this, we need to understand your views. **Please help us to help you by completing a short COVID-19 Vaccine survey.**

For more information, you may contact:
Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)
Tel: (868) 299-0895
Email: postmaster@carpha.org

Process for Emergency Use Review by CARPHA-CRS (nonCOVAX vaccines)

Market authorization holder (MAH) submits application and fee to CRS

CRS team reviews dossier (2-5 days)

CRS contacts MAH with queries (if any)

Verification successful: CARPHA Recommends vaccines to CARPHA Member States

Member State registers or authorizes use / importation of vaccine

Interactive HIS to
allow registration for
vaccination and report
side effects

1

Vaccination on-site for
hotel workers

2

Using zoom sessions
with HCW to
overcome vaccine
hesitancy

3

Vaccination every
other day to allow
record keeping and to
avoid burnout

4



7

Consideration of a
travel pass to promote
free movement among
countries

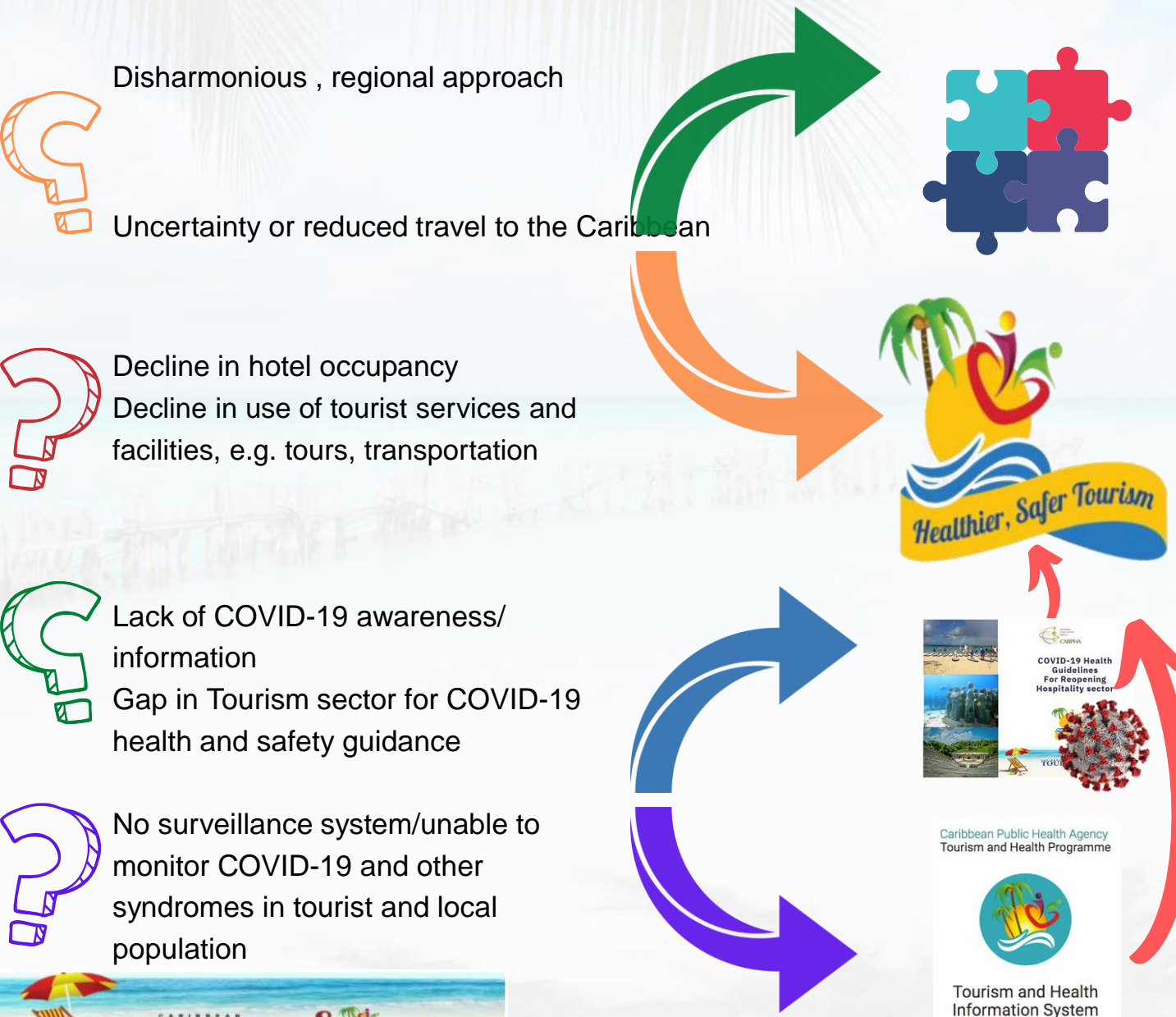
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Morning appointments
for the elderly and
afternoon for the
younger residents

5

Community
vaccination sites-
churches, centers,
drive-in, hotels

Travel and Tourism in the Caribbean



- CARPHA-CTO-CHTA-GTRCMC-OECS COVID-19 Task Force
- Regional Guidelines, technical guidance documents, infographics and reopening guidelines
- Collaboration with CWI, CAL (in process) re: advocating the Caribbean as a healthy and safe destination
- Promotion and advocacy: videos, brochures, travel magazines

- HST stamp incentivises tourist facilities and services to become the "healthier, safer option"
- Increases marketability; gives comparative advantage --> increased profit
- Publicised on CTO/CHTA/CARPHA webpages

- General and tourism-specific capacity building, awareness to COVID-19 and health and safety guidance
- Requirement for HST Stamp

- Confidential self-reporting
- Novel. real-time, early warning and response Tourism and Health Information System (THiS)
- Surveillance of syndromes, detection and response to outbreaks
- Requirement for HST Stamp



Travel and Tourism in the Caribbean



Too much misinformation
Have to get to multiple sources to get information on COVID-19 and Caribbean travel requirements
Limited accessibility
Outdated information



- Free Caribbean Travellers Health App
- Readily accessible, updated, expert information on COVID-19, travel/entry requirements, health alerts, facilities with HST stamp, vaccinations
- Links to THP and CARPHA Situation reports

Tourism & Health Program

Elevating Caribbean tourism by building traveller's confidence and reinstating healthy and safer travel to the Caribbean, especially during COVID-19



Real-time monitoring and response via the Tourism Health Information System (THiS)



Caribbean Travellers Health Assurance Stamp for Healthier, Safer Tourism



Regional Guidelines for Response to Travellers Illness in Hotels and Ships



Capacity building in COVID-19 Health Guidance, Food Safety and Environmental Sanitation



Hospitality Health, Safety and Environmental Sanitation (HSE) Standards



Caribbean Travellers Health App



Multi-sectoral tourism and health partnerships



Co-existing with COVID-19

CARPHA has produced guidelines for how we live, work, play and elect our governments in the COVID-19 environment



Work



Play



School



Elections



Finding the Right Balance Between Lives and Livelihoods



Photo credit: GIS Barbados

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