



CARIBBEAN  
HOTEL & TOURISM  
ASSOCIATION



For Immediate Release

Source: Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) and the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)

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## **CARIBBEAN TOURISM AND HEALTH AUTHORITIES PROACTIVE ON CORONAVIRUS**

MIAMI (January 31, 2020) - No cases of the coronavirus have been reported in the Caribbean, assured regional tourism and health officials, who are hard at work aiming to keep the region coronavirus-free.

A partnership established five years ago between the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and the private sector-led Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) as well as the public sector Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) is helping to drive a concerted effort by the region's health and tourism stakeholders to help prevent and mitigate any impact from the spread of the virus, which has been declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a global public health emergency of international concern.

The three organizations quickly mobilized over a week ago, with CARPHA playing a key role in gathering facts and preparing briefs and tools for the region's largest industry, tourism, based upon its consultations with global health authorities, including WHO and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"We see CARPHA as a key intermediary between global and local health authorities in brokering information and sharing intelligence essential to monitoring the situation with the Novel

Coronavirus and preventing its spread into our region. This is important to the health of our residents and visitors and also important to the Caribbean's economic well-being, as tourism is the region's most important contributor to employment and revenue," stated CARPHA's Executive Director Dr. Joy St. John.

"CARPHA is recommending that Caribbean Member States be proactive and vigilant. They must step up surveillance measures at points of entry, communication strategies which emphasize good hand hygiene, and measures targeted at reducing the importation of this new virus to our shores," stated Dr. St. John, who underscored that currently, there are no restrictions to travel to the Caribbean.

While the risk to the Caribbean from the coronavirus is low, health authorities and tourism stakeholders are being vigilant, activating cautionary measures, monitoring and reporting procedures. CARPHA established the world's first Tourism Health Program (THP) nearly five years ago to work collaboratively with CHTA and CTO to address health and safety threats. Over 200 hotels throughout the region are also part of a Tourism Health Information System (THiS), and with the coronavirus threat, CHTA is encouraging every hotel in the region to be part of the THP and THiS. CARPHA offers a range of online support materials and videos to guide the tourism industry.

Frank Comito, CEO and Director General of CHTA, advises that the organization is working with its federation of 33 national hotel and tourism associations throughout the region, advising them to be vigilant with sanitary precautions, monitoring of guest and employee illnesses, and prompt reporting to local health authorities any questionable illnesses.

"The Caribbean is one of the world's great escapes, affording the traveler with the opportunity to be refreshed and renewed as they enjoy our incredible natural beauty, people and cultures. We want to safeguard our guests and employees and provide assurances that they will continue to enjoy all that we offer. CARPHA is an invaluable partner in helping us to do this," said Comito.

CHTA and CARPHA are also planning a webinar, scheduled for Tuesday, February 4, to brief the industry on the latest developments and offer additional advice on cautionary measures that can be taken to mitigate the spread of coronavirus, notwithstanding bolstering existing influenza preparedness plans and implementing measures to protect the most vulnerable in the Caribbean.

#### About the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) is the Caribbean's leading association representing the interests of national hotel and tourism associations. For more than 55 years, CHTA has been the backbone of the Caribbean hospitality industry. Working with some 1,000 hotel and allied members, and 33 National Hotel Associations, CHTA is shaping the Caribbean's future and helping members to grow their businesses. Whether helping to navigate critical issues in sales and marketing, sustainability, legislative issues, emerging technologies, climate

change, data and intelligence or, looking for avenues and ideas to better market and manage businesses, CHTA is helping members on issues which matter most.

For further information, visit [www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com](http://www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com).

#### About the Caribbean Public Health Agency

The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) is the new single regional public health agency for the Caribbean. It was legally established in July 2011 by an Inter-governmental Agreement signed by Caribbean Member States and began operation in January 2013. The Agency is the Caribbean region's collective response to strengthening and reorienting its health system approach so that it is equipped to address the changing nature of public health challenges. The approach is people centered and evidence informed.

For more information visit [www.carpha.org](http://www.carpha.org).

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