



NATIONAL STATEMENT ON COVID-19

**By the Hon Wendy Colleen Phipps
Minister of State with Responsibility for Health**

March 25, 2020

In my capacity as Minister of State with Responsibility for Health, it is my duty to inform you that as of 11:03 pm on Tuesday, March 24, 2020, the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis confirmed its first two cases of the novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) in St. Kitts.

The patients are a 57 year-old female and a 21 year-old male (of the same household), both of whom are Kittitian nationals, with recent travel histories to New York, USA – a jurisdiction which, up until March 24, 2020 had recorded some 23,230 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Our Government is advised that both patients arrived in the Federation on March 18, 2020, were tested on March 20, 2020, and have been in home quarantine ever since their return to the Federation.

Both patients and their families have been duly notified.

We wish to remind the public that the infection of both patients is travel-related, meaning that the cases of COVID-19 were imported into the Country. Every effort is now being taken to prevent the possibility of community or local transmission.

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Among the other key measures being taken by the Ministry of Health are the following:

- 1) In-depth contact tracing in an effort to correctly assess the persons with whom both patients would have interacted;
- 2) Quarantine and monitoring of the contacts of the patients in order to ensure that they are handled as per WHO-approved protocols.
- 3) Based on data collected from contact tracing, containment of the infection would be executed in order to restrict spread of the infection in the local community.

The Ministry of Health in particular – and Federal Government in general – wish to remind all citizens and residents that every measure is being made to fully execute the National Pandemic Virus Action Plan that has been approved in response to COVID-19. This is not a time for panic and fear. In fact, the opposite is required of all of us: we are called upon to remain calm and to follow the advice of the Ministry of Health which is the official national authority on health information related to the novel corona virus. As citizens and residents of our beloved St. Kitts and Nevis we are all called to get onboard, to work together and to be our brother's keeper in this global fight against COVID-19. As such, Cabinet has accepted the recommendation of the Ministry of Health that schools be closed as at end of school day today.

I pledge to you that our Government will continue to do everything in our power to maintain and protect the health, wellness and quality of life of our people. May God be merciful to us all.

March 25, 2020

FEDERAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH

