



# **THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF PORT OF SPAIN**

## **Health, Safety and Environment Team**

c/o Archbishop's House, 27 Maraval Road, Port of Spain

Bulletin # 14

## **Contact Tracing**

**Date of Issue: April 16, 2021**

## **Introduction**

Possible exposure **to a COVID-19-confirmed patient, who attended a public church service**, allows for an exchange of information with the person/persons (contacts) exposed to the confirmed case of COVID-19, and offers an opportunity to answer questions and provide referrals to relevant health authorities for further evaluation and support. The goals of this interaction are to inform person(s) that they may have been exposed to COVID-19 and gather information to be communicated to County Medical Officers of Health (CMOH), who will provide expert advice and support. Developing trust and a warm, empathetic rapport with possible contacts, while maintaining a professional relationship, is key to providing effective support and collecting accurate information to inform the next steps in the contact tracing investigation. CMOHs in the respective locations will decide how to implement relevant activities and how to advise specific people, or groups of people on testing and quarantining, if necessary.

## **Objectives of Contact Tracing by Contact Tracers**

1. To introduce themselves and establish credibility.
2. Verify contact information.
3. Build rapport.

## **Some Principles that Contact Tracers would normally employ in relating with a person exposed to COVID-19**

- i. Ensure and protect confidentiality.
- ii. Demonstrate ethical and professional conduct.
- iii. Be attentive and respectful.
- iv. Adapt to address concerns.
- v. Effective listening techniques.
- vi. Identify areas of need.
- vii. Set the stage for ongoing communication and support during quarantine.

## **Steps to be followed in the Contact Tracing Process**

1. The Parish Priest is informed and he in turn informs the County Medical Officer of Health as a matter of urgency
2. All services and public access to the building are suspended with immediate effect for cleaning and sanitizing, which should be within 24 to 48 hours.
3. A 'deep clean' of the facilities must be performed by the staff of a professional company. The cleaning and sanitizing of all hard services as well as washing and drying of all linens, at a high temperature. Special attention must be given also to the cleaning and sanitizing of the vessels used in the sanctuary by using an alcohol-based solution containing a minimum of 70% alcohol.
4. Once it is identified that the individual testing positive for Covid-19 attended a church service, the Contact Tracers from the office of the County Medical Officer of Health will advise fellow congregants, from that same date and time of service, of their potential exposure. **The foregoing explains the need to maintain an accurate log of the names and contact numbers of each worshiper at each church service.**
5. Contact Tracers, following a telephone interview with the individual testing positive for Covid-19, will be able to identify occasions of possible high-risk transmission e.g. shared private transport versus less risky behaviour e.g. socially- distant conversation outdoors, with nose and mouth covering.
6. Individuals with prolonged, direct contact with the index (confirmed Covid-19 positive) case, i.e. primary contacts, are instructed to quarantine at home for 14 days. At present, under community spread with a rising number of positive cases, primary contacts both symptomatic and asymptomatic are encouraged to attend their local Health Centre for Covid-19 testing.
7. The Contact Tracers from the Office of the County Medical Officer of Health will also provide guidance, regarding the need or not for quarantining, to congregants who were also present in the church and in relatively close proximity to confirmed case(s) for at least 15 minutes.
8. **Contact Tracing is a robust process on which the Ministry Of Health places much reliance to assist in restricting the spread of COVID-19. The County Medical Officer of Health will give clearance to re-open a building, usually only after fourteen days from the date the last contact is informed.**

## **Summary**

Our country is experiencing unprecedented increases in the growth of the number of positive cases. We all have to be responsible and to follow the protocols established by the Ministry of Health and our Archdiocesan HSE Team. The cooperation of all will greatly assist in controlling this deadly pandemic.

## **Contact Information for County Medical Officers of Health**

### **St. George West**

3-5Jerningham Avenue  
Belmont  
Telephone: (868)-285-8993 ext. 5050  
Fax: 624-916

### **St. George Central**

Corner Hassanali Street and El Socorro Main Road  
San Juan  
Telephone: (868)-285-8991 ext. 4011  
Fax: 674-8295

### **St. George East**

John Shaw Avenue  
Arima  
Telephone: (868)-667-5273  
Fax: 667-5273

### **Nariva/ Mayaro**

County Health Administration Office  
Narine Ramrattan Building  
Naparima Mayaro Road  
Rio Claro  
Telephone: 222-5005-17 or 644-1256  
Fax: 644-1643

### **Caroni**

Southern Main Road Couva  
Telephone: (868)-226-4400  
Fax: 636-3960

### **Victoria**

160 Pointe-a-Pierre Road  
San Fernando  
Telephone: (868)-652-2016  
Fax: 653-0515

### **St. Patrick**

Siparia Administrative Complex  
Allies Street  
Siparia  
Telephone: (868)-226-5000  
Fax: 649-1827

### **Tobago**

Public Health Services Department  
Robinson Street  
Scarborough  
Tobago  
Telephone: (868)-639-3751 or 660-7000  
Fax: 635-1651