



COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA

**Address by the Honourable Roosevelt Skerrit
Prime Minister and Minister for Finance on the COVID-19 Cluster
August 3, 2021**

Fellow Dominican, residents and friends, good morning.

I address you with the unfortunate news that our country is currently dealing with a growing cluster of COVID-19 cases.

As you are aware, Government has had in place several measures to reduce the likelihood of a COVID 19 outbreak; including a number of protocols and increased patrol at our borders; restriction in the number of people attending events; mandatory use of masks; and up to last weekend the cancellation of social gatherings; all geared at protecting our people.

However, many of these measures are not being observed by some of our residents. These unfortunately, are the same residents who are unvaccinated.

The current cluster appears to be associated with an individual or individuals who entered Dominica illegally and took part in a biker's activity along with a 'jam' at a location in Pottersville, known at the LOT, on Sunday July 25, 2021.

As you are aware, there was a public announcement from the Ministry of Health requesting people who attended this event at the LOT in Pottersville to get tested. Over 200 people presented themselves for testing at the Roseau Health Centre, yesterday, August 2, 2021. We thank all those who heeded the call for their cooperation.

To date there are 10 confirmed cases associated with this event plus two imported cases bringing the total number of active cases in Dominica to 12.

Meanwhile 14 of the individuals who received rapid antigen test at the Roseau Health Centre yesterday tested positive. We are currently awaiting the results of the PCR tests to confirm the status of these individuals.

All confirmed cases and those whose rapid antigen tests were positive have been placed in isolation or quarantine in a Government facility.

Based on the observations so far, the current cluster of the COVID-19 cases is quite different from previous clusters, mainly because a number of the people who have tested positive, and their contacts, are presenting with Flu like symptoms. This makes the virus much more contagious.

Therefore, to reduce the likelihood of further infections, the Ministry of Health has recommended some measures which the Cabinet has accepted

The measures are as follows:

1. A Curfew Order will be in effect from 6:00 pm to 5:00 am daily from Tuesday August 3, 2021 for the next 7 days;
2. However, in the case of the weekend the curfew will begin at 5:00 pm on Saturday August 7, 2021 and will continue throughout the day on Sunday August 8, 2021 and end on Monday August 9, 2021 at 5 am. Curfew will then resume the night of Monday August 9, 2021 at 6 pm.
3. All non-essential businesses are to remain closed.
4. Essential workers including people working at the ports, healthcare workers, banks and credit unions, hardware stores, telecoms and broadcasting, pharmacies, farmers, security services, utilities—the exhaustive list will be published.

This measure will also exclude Workers and People who are:

- a. travelling in and out of the country,
- b. seeking medical care,
- c. shopping for necessities,
- d. banking but by appointment only,
- e. caring for a family member, pet or livestock,
- f. involved in construction, farming and manufacturing,
 - all of whom will be allowed to continue their activity.

5. The hours of operation for businesses that are allowed to open are from 6:00am to 4:00pm.
 6. All businesses must ensure physical distancing measures of 6 ft apart are maintained and should control the number of customers inside of the premises to ensure no more 4 customers per isle.
 7. ALL Bars and nightclubs will remain closed.
 8. Restaurants No dining-in (take-outs only)
 9. No consumption of alcohol in the public.
 10. Churches and other places of Worship are to remain closed.
 11. Weddings are to be limited to 5 people while funerals are to be no more than 10 individuals
 12. The following will NOT be permitted:
 - a. Private parties,
 - b. Recreational or sporting events
 - c. Social events
 - d. Meetings of fraternal societies or of clubs
 - e. Group tours
 - f. Loud music
 13. Public Transportation will be restricted to 3 individuals per row,
 14. There will be no visitation to the Hospital, Prison, Infirmary or Quarantine Facility.
 15. The airports and seaports will remain open
 16. Remember that masks are mandatory by law
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17. The penalty for people who fail to comply with the Order has been increased to \$5,000.

These measures are not intended to scare the population, but to ensure that we act quickly to avoid a deterioration of the situation.

I make a special appeal to the people who have been contacts of the individuals who have tested positive for the virus, or individuals who have attended any of the events which I mentioned earlier, to come forward and get tested.

Meanwhile we remind all residents to remain vigilant and adhere to the Covid 19 protocols. Wash or sanitize your hands often, cover your mouth if you are coughing or sneezing, wear your masks.

Avoid moving from home to home, avoid family visits

If you have flulike symptoms, call the hotline at 448 2151, 448 2153, 448 2156, 611 43 25, or 1 800 219, so you could get tested.

Very importantly get vaccinated. Vaccines are available at the District Health Centres islandwide.

Vaccination reduces the likelihood of contracting and transmitting the virus; and also reduces the likelihood of becoming seriously ill, if you become infected with the virus.

Once again, I wish to thank the health officials for their dedication to task—some of our residents have not been very kind to them—over the past week they have received much hostility and abuse by a few of the contacts and their families—we as a country must condemn this behaviour.

These officials are working hard to protect us as a country and the least we could do is to be cordial and cooperative.

Government has done and continues to do its part. We must all as responsible citizens play our part and adhere to the measures and protocols.

Speak to your children, your parents, relatives, friends, co-workers and neighbours,---- encourage them to comply with all protocols, so that we could return to normal operation within the shortest possible time.

In other words, if all of us comply over the next 7 days, we can re-open the country fully thereafter.

As I close, I pray for God's guidance and protection over all of our people and our country. I also pray for speedy recovery for all of those who are now infected with the virus. Let us all continue to pray for them, their families and for Dominica.

I thank you.