

Healthier SAFER CARIBBEAN TOURISM

As the Caribbean is entering its high tourism season and popular mass gathering events like Christmas, Carnival and Cricket, the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) is pleased to announce its novel, Regional Tourism and Health Program (THP) for a **HEALTHIER, SAFER, MORE SECURE, HAPPIER TOURISM EXPERIENCE.**

Travel and tourism is the business of Caribbean with over 50M visitors in 2016. However, diseases like the recent Zika epidemic and other public health threats have negatively impacted on visitors' experience.

Recognizing that the Caribbean is the most tourism dependent region in the world, and that tourism, which bring so many economic benefits, is vulnerable and can also contribute to health, safety and environmental (HSE) threats, including the introduction and spread of diseases by both visitors and locals, CARPHA in partnership with the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) established a regional THP to address HSE threats impacting on tourism.

The aim is to improve the health, safety and security of visitors and locals and thereby contribute to enhancing the quality, competitiveness, reputation, resilience and sustainability of Caribbean tourism.

With funding from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the THP is being executed by CARPHA, the Caribbean's sole public health agency responsible for preventing disease, promoting and protecting health.



Components of the



The THP is addressing HSE threats impacting on tourism via an integrated approach of surveillance, guidelines, training, standards and partnerships.

- **Real Time Early Warning and Response Tourism Health Information Surveillance System (THIS.carpha.org)** This web based system collects and analyses illness data in real-time, for early alerts and rapid response to stop/reduce the spread of public health threats. Reporting is confidential and can be easily done online by computer or a smartphone by hotels, guesthouses, agencies, doctors or even the "health conscious" visitor.
- **Regional Guidelines** for monitoring and response to travel-related public health



issues occurring among visitors to the Caribbean by air (hotels) and sea (ships), for harmonized & standardized responses, to avoid illness spread.

- **Food Safety and Environment Sanitation Capacity Building.** The Caribbean is known for its delicious cultural foods. However travellers illnesses have been commonly linked to unsafe foods. Improving food safety will contribute to a healthier more reputable tourism product. This component also allows for globally recognized certification.
- **Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) Standards and Certification.** Caribbean-wide credible HSE "clean and green" Standards & Recognition System.
- **Multisectoral Partnerships** with regional and international health and tourism stakeholders to address public health threats that transcends boundaries in a rapid manner.

The THP is currently being implemented in **Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica** and the **Turks and Caicos Islands** with the aim to extend to other islands.

This integrated program is the first Caribbean-wide and global effort of its kind, setting an international precedent. There is no better time than now, as new threats to health and travel in the region emerge and in this era of real time, instant information flow, for creating mechanisms for monitoring and responding to tourism health and safety threats.

According to Dr Lisa Indar, the Head of the THP... *it is critical for the Caribbean, more than in any other region in the world, to be proactive and implement measures to monitor, respond and mitigate against tourism HSE threats in a timely manner. This will reduce the spread of diseases, the negative publicity and reputational damage that health events can have, and thus promote a healthier, safer, more secure and reputable Caribbean tourism product.*

More information on the THP can be found at <http://carpha.org/What-We-Do/Tourism-and-Health-Programme> and on <https://youtu.be/ic72FQpbRRs>

Visitors rest assured, we are making Caribbean tourism healthier and safer for YOU.