

[COVID-19](#)

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UWI Debe quarantine for T&T nationals returning from Suriname

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More than 60 Trinidad and Tobago nationals stuck in Suriname due to the closure of this country's borders as part of COVID-19 measures will be placed in quarantine at the UWI Debe campus on their return.

They are due back in T&T by the end of the week.

Dr Maryam Richards, Principal Medical Officer, Institutions, Ministry of Health assured that everything is in place to ensure that the returning nationals will be comfortable and receive the appropriate levels of care. The facility can house up to 72 patients in individual rooms.

Dr Richards was speaking at the daily virtual media briefing hosted by the Ministry on Wednesday.

She could not say if the T&T nationals were tested in Suriname but indicated that arrangements have been made to have them swabbed for testing on return home.

Dr Richards said: “In order for them to have an efficient swab process we have set up a swab team with primary care physicians from the SWRHA and we have already identified and located swabs to ensure that all persons will be tested as they arrive.”

The UWI Debe campus is being used as part of Government’s parallel healthcare system in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, representing a proactive and evidence-based approach providing specialised care for those with the coronavirus.

The Couva Hospital and Multi-Training Facility and retrofitted health facilities are being used to operationalise this system.

The parallel healthcare system ensures that the rest of the population has continued care through existing facilities at hospitals.

Through this system 922 beds (75 beds in Tobago) distributed across 12 facilities will offer four levels of care to patients.

Severe and critical patients will be housed at the Couva Hospital and Augustus Long Hospital;

Intermediate level care patients will be housed at Caura Hospital, Princess Elizabeth Home, Scarborough General Hospital, and Arima General Hospital.

Step-down facility – Home of Football, Couva; Sangre Grande Centre – for patients who require care after being hospitalised and to be reintegrated back into their homes.

Quarantine facilities for staff members and returning nationals are in place at the Tacarigua Centre, UWI St Augustine Campus at Debe, Penal and at Balandra.

Dr Richards said this dedicated care system for COVID-19 patients will ensure a decreased burden on the traditional healthcare system.