

# CARPHA, TTL working to prevent Carnival diseases spreading



CARPHA's new executive director, Dr Lisa Indar

The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) is hoping to reduce instances of people coming down with the 'Carnival virus' through its Regional Tourism and Health Programme (THP).

In a news release yesterday, CAR- PHA said it has collaborated with Tourism Trinidad Ltd (TTL) to build capacity to promote healthier, safer tourism as Trinidad prepares for Carnival celebrations.

The release said, "Both CARPHA and TTL are committed to safe and responsible tourism to protect the health and well-being of both visitors and the local populations, especially during the Carnival season. Trinidad and Tobago's Carnival, known as the "Greatest Show on Earth" expects a high number of tourists from many countries to experience the rich and authentic celebrations. During mass gathering events, there is the increased likelihood that infectious diseases can spread faster as large numbers of persons are in close contact. CARPHA, through its regional Tourism and Health Programme (THP), aims to strengthen capacity among tourism stakeholders to better manage and respond to any public health threats."

CARPHA said 148 people from tourism entities in Trinidad participated in CARPHA's "Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases during Mass Gatherings" training on February 18, 2025. Participants were from tourism and hospitality sectors, including accommodations, food and beverages, transportation providers, tour guides, tour operators and organisations associated with events such as promoters and mas bands.

This targetted training, CAR- PHA said, provided Trinidad tourism stakeholders with the knowledge, capacity and practical examples of prevention and control measures of infectious diseases in the Caribbean region during mass gathering events, such as Carnival 2025.

Carnival is Trinidad's largest tourism attraction, with over 30,000 people coming for the event on average annually, according to Central Statistical Office statistics.

Dr Lisa Indar, executive Director, CARPHA, said, "This training is important to build the capacity of tourism entities to reduce illnesses and public health threats. Carnival attracts a high number of tourists, which can perhaps contribute to the spread of new and re-emerging infectious diseases. Tourism stakeholders will be equipped with the knowledge of how to prevent and operate safely during mas gathering events, reducing the risk and occurrences of vaccine-preventable diseases, vector-borne diseases, respiratory diseases, food and water-borne diseases and sexually transmitted diseases."

Mr Cornell Buckradee, interim CEO of TTL, said, "CAR- PHA, through this capacity building, urges continued efforts which will keep the region safe. We thank CARPHA for recognising the public health threats and for taking proactive measures to prevent and control them. We look forward to a continued successful collaboration with CARPHA to ensure tourism stakeholders are prepared to operate with an increased level of awareness, leading to improved levels of health and safety within their planning and operations."