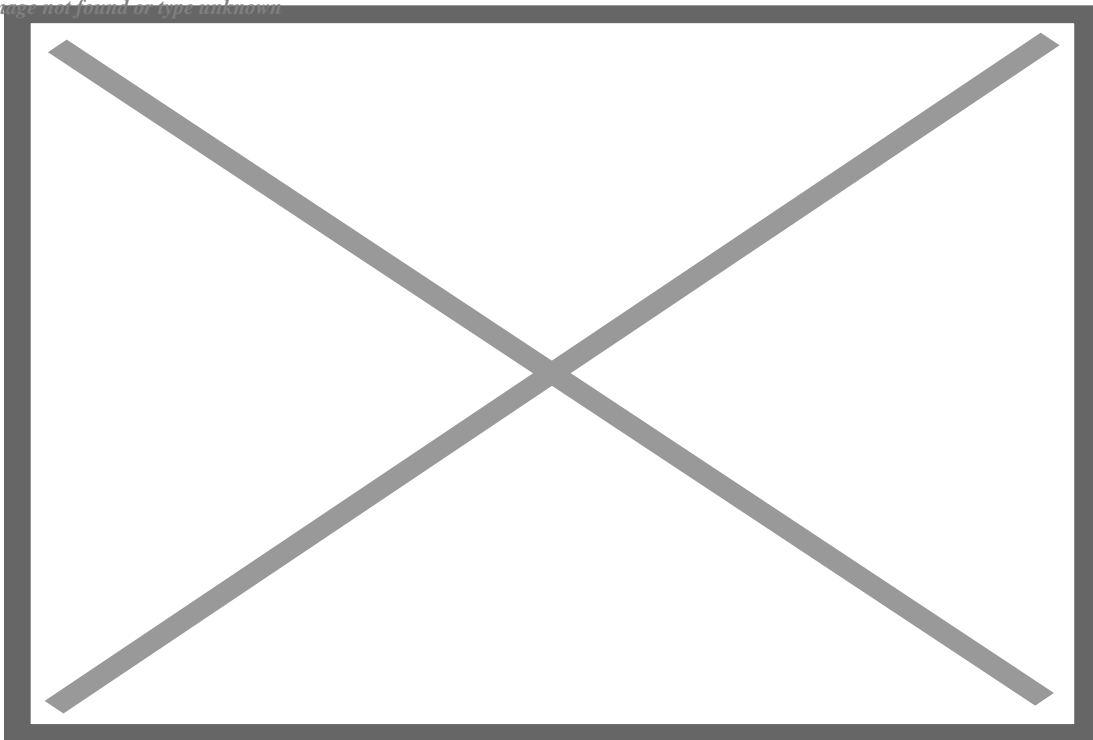


Reporting containment of COVID-19, Cuba enters “new normality”

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Prime Minister Manuel Marrero announced the measures of the New Normality Phase

Havana, October 8 (RHC)-As of next Monday, October 12, most of Cuba's provinces will move on to the New Normality phase; after seven months of confrontation with Covid-19, Prime Minister Manuel Marrero announced Thursday.

In a television appearance, together with President Miguel Díaz-Canel, the island's head of government informed that the central provinces of Ciego de Ávila and Sancti Spiritus would remain in the limited native transmission stage with mobility restrictions.

Due to its complexity as the capital city, Havana will move on to the third phase of the confrontation with Covid-19 and will have a differentiated treatment, he said.

Marrero explained that the transition to the new stage seeks to guarantee the population's health while economic activity and services are reactivated under strict epidemiological control and hygienic-sanitary measures.

Cuba's universal, community-based healthcare system has contained its outbreak and reduced mortality by hospitalizing all confirmed cases, tracing and isolating their contacts and applying a raft of therapeutic treatments.

Cuba has reported just 11 deaths from Covid-19 per million inhabitants, compared with 203 for the Dominican Republic and 647 for the United States, statistics from Johns Hopkins University show.

That has come at a cost, however.

The state has, for example, paid for putting 115,000 suspected cases and contacts of confirmed cases at isolation facilities, according to Marrero. Of those, fewer than 5% tested positive for the virus.

From now on, Cuba will allow people to isolate at home, Marrero said.

The Prime Minister affirmed that the new normality supposes adopting a lifestyle that favors individual and collective health. He called for the responsible assumption of guidelines and incorporating actions such as physical distancing and the use of means of protection into daily life.

Among the measures that will be implemented next Monday is the opening of national and foreign tourism and international flights, except for Havana, with all health requirements.

Health centers will also resume their normal activities, although restrictive measures will be maintained for visits to patients in hospitals.

In labor and salary matters, the legislation will be reestablished, while teleworking and telecommuting will be promoted to encourage physical distance.

Recreational centers and restaurants will also return to normal, in strict compliance with the health measures adopted, and special requirements will be established for closed leisure facilities.

Marrero pointed out that active epidemiological surveillance will be strengthened in this new phase, targeting patients with symptoms, vulnerable groups, and risk areas.

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