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FOLLOW UP WITH RELEVANT LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES UNDERWAY AFTER CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASE LEAVES THE ISLAND

ST. GEORGE'S: APRIL 1, 2020: GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICE: Grenada's Minister for Health says government is following up with the relevant law enforcement authorities after one of the cases confirmed last weekend, left Grenada on the same day the confirmation was announced, but before he got his results.

During a statement issued on Wednesday April 1, 2020, Hon. Nickolas Steele said they subsequently learned that the individual is now in the United Kingdom.

Providing a timeline of the events, Minister Steele said "He was tested on Thursday, March 26th. The results came back on Saturday, March 28th. As per procedure, health officials tried to reach him minutes later to inform that he had tested positive for COVID-19. As Minister, I went ahead and announced the cases to the nation, as we have been doing. The individual was found neither on the Saturday, nor the Sunday. On Sunday, health officials reported the matter to the Police. It was later confirmed that the individual and his family left the island aboard Air Canada, before he got his results on Saturday."

The Health Minister says the situation is troubling in many ways "especially the level of exposure between his place of residence in Grenada and his abode in the United Kingdom, where he says he is now. This is a level of dishonesty and recklessness, such that we do not need at this time. We cannot stress enough, lives are already at stake, without the added risks. We have followed up with that individual to ascertain his movements and mode of movement on the day he left the country undetected. We are also following up with relevant law enforcement authorities because, in our view, this is cause for liability."

Minister Steele also reminded the general population that as per international procedure, once someone is tested, that person is placed under self- quarantine at their place of residence, and officials monitor them, until their tests results are obtained. He added that once they test positive, and once they do not need medical attention during the period of their illness, they are quarantined in homes and constantly monitored for the next 14 days.

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Pointing out that this is the standard practice everywhere in the world, Minister Steele said this calls for a certain degree of honesty, respect and personal responsibility. "This is a matter of public confidence and trust. We, as officials, trust that no one would be so reckless, as to knowingly expose others to this deadly disease. To further enforce compliance, we have invoked the Quarantine Act, which states that individuals who disobey are subject to a ten thousand dollar fine or 6 months in prison. It is regrettable that this has happened and we are taking steps to ensure that it never happens again."

He says in recent days, they have been able to secure several other facilities throughout the Tri-Island State, to add to the room stock that we now have, as possible quarantine areas, if we were to ever need more facilities.

The Health Minister warned that any individual who attempts to, or breaches the Quarantine Act will be forcibly quarantined in public facilities.

Nickolas T C Steele
Minister for Health, Social Security and International Business.