**Hospitality Sector vaccination rate now over 60% of employees vaccinated.**

*Protecting all employees and getting the industry in recovery mode is a priority.*

**Tuesday June 15, 2021, Antigua and Barbuda:** Antigua and Barbuda hospitality industry partners are looking ahead and seeing recovery in sight with airlift and occupancy showing slow signs of increase.

The industry sees one of the major factors in the recovery process being the vaccination of employees. Resorts, tours, retailers, restaurants, taxi drivers and all related hospitality businesses have all been exceptional in their support and encouragement of employees to get vaccinated.  2nd dose vaccinations are now underway for over 3,500 employees in the sector with many other employees now also taking the opportunity to get their 1st dose.

 A recent industry survey by the Antigua and Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association shows average occupancy for the destination for October – December 2021, currently showing at an estimated 45% with a potential for growth as we are encouraged by our new Level 1 rating from the CDC in the United States, the possibility of the UK moving Antigua and Barbuda to the green list and the return of the Canadian travelers in the last quarter of this year.  This number will continue to climb as we also promote the safety of our destination.  Mr. Vernon A. Jeffers Snr, Executive Chairman of the ABHTA remarked “*we must be serious and think aggressively about promoting our destination as Sun, Sea and Safe.  Safety means ensuring that we protect our employees and encourage them to get vaccinated, protecting themselves and their families. Our team members must also feel safe in a work environment where they can deliver the best service to guests. Our success is simply vaccination, where each one, protects the other.”*

The Honorable Charles ‘Max’ Fernandez, Minister of Tourism and Investment lends his support to the vaccination process for the hospitality sector. *“Vaccination is still the only proven scientifically known way for us to get out of the clutches of this pandemic; saving lives and livelihoods and allowing us to fully open our country for tourism.  We are encouraged by the steadily increasing vaccination rate in the sector and will continue to support our industry partners however we can, to ensure employees are safe and the sector continues to see increased growth and a return to full employment”, said the Tourism Minister.*

Employees wishing to get more information about the vaccination process should speak directly with their health care provider.

**ABOUT THE ABHTA**

The ABHTA collectively represents the hospitality industry by educating, advocating and promoting to increase visitation and the economic benefits for Antigua and Barbuda. The primary focus is on the needs and best interests of the members of the Association. The membership of the Antigua & Barbuda Hotels & Tourism Association is open to all hotels, restaurants, airlines, and companies directly or indirectly involved in the tourism sector of Antigua and Barbuda. Joining the Association is a way of showing your support of the island’s tourism product and helping us to further develop our tourism industry.