Seattle, Wash., March 27, 2020 (9:40 a.m. PDT) — Zaandam is currently off the coast of Panama and rendezvoused with sister ship Rotterdam at 7:30 p.m. local time yesterday, March 26. We received approval from Panamanian authorities to conduct ship-to-ship operations at anchor between the two vessels. Medical supplies and additional medical staff were transferred to Zaandam.

Today we announced a plan to transfer groups of healthy Zaandam guests to Rotterdam, with strict protocols for this process developed in conjunction with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Only those who have not been ill will be moved, and health screenings will be conducted before transferring. Priority for the first guests to transfer will be given to those on Zaandam with inside staterooms and who are over 70. Once aboard Rotterdam, all guests will continue to remain in their staterooms until disembarkation. Any guests who are currently ill, or in isolation as a close contact, and all crew will remain on Zaandam.

While the onward plan for both ships is still being finalized, we continue to work with the Panamanian authorities on approval to transit the Panama Canal for sailing to Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Yesterday a number of patients with respiratory symptoms were tested for COVID-19 and two individuals tested positive. Out of an abundance of caution, on March 22 when Zaandam first saw a number of guests reporting to the medical center with influenza-like illness symptoms, we took immediate protective measures, including asking all guests to self-isolate in their staterooms and implementing all other appropriate precautions that have been developed in coordination with the CDC. All guests and crew received face masks yesterday and were provided with instructions on when and how to wear them.

Currently, 53 guests (4%) and 85 crew (14%) have reported to Zaandam’s medical center with influenza-like illness symptoms. There are 1,243 guests and 586 crew on board. On Zaandam there are four doctors and four nurses. On Rotterdam there are two doctors and four nurses.

Holland America Line can confirm that four older guests have passed away on Zaandam. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families and we are doing everything we can to support them during this difficult time.
Complimentary telephone counseling services have been made available to guests and crew if they would like extra support during this time. For those with family members on board, they can call the Zaandam Care Center at the following numbers for information: 1-877-425-2231 or 1-206-626-7398.

Zaandam was sailing a South America cruise that departed Buenos Aires, Argentina, on March 7 and was originally scheduled to end at San Antonio, Chile, on March 21. Due to global health concerns, Holland America Line made the decision to suspend its global cruise operations for 30 days and end its current cruises in progress as quickly as possible so guests could return home. No one has been off the ship since March 14 in Punta Arenas, Chile.

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