SUMMARY OF COVID-19 SITUATION—Report # 17

National: On April 22nd, 2020, FSM President David W. Panuelo and FSM Vice President Yosiwo P. George held a video conference with all the FSM State Governor’s to further unify the Nation’s efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and discuss the terms of the social distancing requirements and other safety precautions that shall be mandated, within 30 days, for the entire Nation.

All the State Governors agreed to share their current health advisories, precautions and intentions in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case. From these, the National Government will consolidate all the information to come up with a national social distancing strategy that all can abide by.

“It’s crucial that we continue to stand together, and also crucial that our citizens know that they’re being treated fairly and equally whether they are in Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, or Kosrae,” President Panuelo said.

Topics discussed with the Governors included—the current state of the Economic Stimulus Package, the FSM Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program, the state of COVID-19 test kits and machines, and the state of incoming ventilators and other medical equipment and supplies. President Panuelo signed the Economic Stimulus Package into law later the same afternoon and the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program will provide unemployment benefits to individuals who have become unemployed as a direct result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Regarding ventilators and other crucial medical equipment, it was noted that ventilators are forthcoming. Pohnpei State a get total of eighteen (18) ventilators, Chuuk State seventeen (17), Yap State fourteen (14), and Kosrae State ten (10). These totals include all National and State Government purchases, including donations from the Nation’s friends, allies, and development partners.

Local: The Yap DHS wants the public to know that while all our public health efforts are focused on preparing for and responding to potential COVID-19 risks, it is equally important to also remember that there are other existing disease threats out there such as leptospirosis and dengue. One person in Mogmog confirmed positive through rapid test for the dengue virus which is transmitted by mosquitos. One person on the main island was confirmed with leptospirosis. Leptospirosis is spread through touching of surfaces contaminated with rat urine through ingestion. Both leptospirosis and dengue can be prevented by regular cleaning of your homes and yards to reduce the vector and vermin from entering family spaces. Practicing good hand hygiene by washing hands with clean water and soap regularly before eating, after using the restroom and when preparing food will also help prevent these diseases.

Everyone is reminded to stay hydrated and to drinks lots of water, coconut or liquids during this dry season as it can get quite hot. Dehydration can also cause headaches, vomiting, nausea and fever if it is excessive and these symptoms are some of the same symptoms as COVID-19. NCD patients who have diabetes, hypertension, cancer, kidney disease, lung disease and heart disease should also ensure they are taking their medications on time, eating healthy local food, keeping hydrated, staying home, getting moderate exercise, and keeping their six feet social and physical distancing during this dry season and COVID-19 risk time, as they are at higher risk of developing complications due to compromised immunity.

Yap DHS is aware that there are many people on the main island who wish to return to their home islands in Ulithi, Fais and Woleai but due to the ban on all flights to the outer islands these people have not been able to return home. On April 26, 2020 the Health Crisis Taskforce (HCTF) with the Incident Command Post (IC) will work together to review the status of the ban once the current PUM’s from Palau, currently under home quarantine, have completed their additional 14 days which ends April 26, 2020 without incident. Also on April 26, 2020 the HCTF and the IC will consult with the Governor on reviewing the night time curfew to see if it can be lifted or needs to be continued.

The hospital lab has set up its ID NOW covid-19 testing machine and staff have undergone remote training on how to use it to test for COVID-19. It is anticipated testing services should be fully operational by this weekend. Meanwhile, the Yap DHS is still short on its PPE and medical supplies for COVID-19. Orders have been made but due to the world shortage and transport logistics the arrival of these basic necessities to deal with COVID-19 is delayed indefinitely.

Yap DHS is advising the public to call the hospital on 350-2110 prior to coming to the hospital for medical appointment to see the doctor. This is to reduce crowding at the OPD and minimize the risk of exposure to covid-19 like illness for all.

FOR REGULAR COVID-19 UPDATES
Radio: V6AI 1494 AM (Mon., Wed., Fri.) 8:45am in English. 9.45am and every hour after till 10.45pm in local languages; & 5pm News Bulletin. Also check out https://www.facebook.com/Waab-Community-Health-Center-554531107958008