SUMMARY OF COVID-19 SITUATION—Report # 34

International: To date, the global COVID-19 Pandemic has infected over six million people worldwide and killed more than 370,000 people. Since the start of the pandemic, there has been an urgent need to accelerate the research and development of COVID-19 candidate vaccines. The World Health Organization (WHO) has been supporting this effort. Currently over 120 candidate vaccines have been mapped and sites in 40 countries have expressed an interest to join the Vaccine Solidarity Trial.

National: The FSM Public Information Office reports that on May 30th, 2020, the 21st Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) adopted Congressional Resolution 21-149, which extended His Excellency David W. Panuelo’s Public Health Emergency Declaration to July 31st, 2020.

While for most citizens and residents the most substantive change is implementation of the social distancing standards and measures developed by the FSM National and State Governments, the Resolution also calls for the development of a repatriation plan of FSM citizens, students, residents, and members of the Diplomatic Corps once quarantine and isolation facilities meet “acceptable standards.”

While Congressional Resolution 21-138 advised that rare exceptions for travel to the FSM may include capacity-building personnel and medical referral patients, Resolution 21-149 expands this potential list to include human remains and the medical and family attendants thereof, as well as Government officials whose duties are “vital and indispensable.”

While screening and quarantine procedures would remain in effect, and said travel might only be allowable given the sound advice of the FSM National Task Force and the relevant State Task Force, the Resolution allows the potential repatriation of some categories of individuals under some specific circumstances.

The Government is aware that the Nation’s citizens stranded abroad are keen to return. The Resolution calls for the National and State Task Forces to cooperate in developing a plan for the repatriation of citizens, students, residents, and members of the Diplomatic Corps once quarantine and isolation facilities meet “acceptable standards.” When this plan is developed and implemented, the Panuelo-George administration is likely to require any potential repatriating citizen or resident to submit to a COVID-19 test prior to arrival in the Nation, followed by another test during and at the conclusion of their mandatory quarantine period upon arrival.

President Panuelo, who has been meeting with the Nation’s Governors on a weekly basis through video-teleconferencing, will continue to discuss repatriation of the FSM’s stranded citizens with an aim to bring those stranded home in the safest possible manner.

Local: The Yap Department of Health Services is using this quiet period while there are no PUI, PUM or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Yap to continue building capacity of health workers to respond to COVID-19 treatment and care, while the Medical Supply Division continues to procure needed medicines, medical supplies and equipment for COVID-19 readiness.

Trainings for nurses include online Zoom sessions on intensive care unit (ICU) and ventilator use for ICU patients. A table top exercise for clinical nurses was conducted on Monday to take nurses through their roles and responsibilities when a suspect or confirmed COVID-19 case is admitted to isolation. Meanwhile, the Division of Public Health (PH) Port of Entry (POE) teams used the weekend arrival of the MV Hapilmohol to implement its COVID-19 POE screening plans with some 345 passengers arriving into Yap from the outer islands. Another simulation exercise is planned for June 3, 2020.

Important points to remember. Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 can be any or all of the following: Runny nose and/or Dry Cough and/or Sore throat for 3-4 days and/or Generalized body pain and/or Shortness of Breath and/or Fever and/or Diarrhea and Loss of taste and/or smell.

Call the COVID-19 Hotline on 350-4161 if you feel or fall sick with any one of the above symptoms before you go to the hospital for advice and further instructions.

HEALTH ADVICE FOR PREVENTION OF COVID-19
1. Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds regularly or use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol and rub for 15 seconds. No more hand shaking!
2. Avoid unnecessary touching of your face (esp. nose, mouth, eyes).
3. Always cover your mouth and nose when you cough/sneeze with tissue and then dispose properly.
4. Stay healthy (eat well, sleep enough, exercise, take breaks, wash betelnut/leaf before chewing).
5. Avoid mass-gatherings and public community events.
6. Practice social/physical distancing—keep 6 ft. away from others.

FOR REGULAR COVID-19 UPDATES: Radio V6AI 1494 AM or KUTE 89.9 FM (every Wed) or the Yap State Media and Protocol FB Page. Also check out the Wa’ab Community Health Center FB Page.