



# Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Update

## Yap Department of Health Services

May 28, 2020



**In YAP:**  
# of confirmed cases in Yap: **0**

# of current PUI in Yap: **0**  
*(Person Under Investigation is one who has COVID-19 symptoms.)*

# of PUM in Yap: **0**  
*(Person Under Monitoring is one without symptoms but has been in contact with a PUI or confirmed case, or has come from a place with confirmed COVID-19 cases and requires quarantine monitoring.)*

**In FSM:**  
# of confirmed cases in Chuuk: **0**  
Pohnpei: **0**  
Kosrae: **0**

**Nth Pac. Region:**  
# of confirmed cases in Guam: **171** (5 deaths)  
CNMI: **22** (2 deaths)  
Palau: **0**  
RMI: **0**

**Globally as of 5/27/20:**  
**WHO Sit Rep**  
# of confirmed cases: **5,488,825**  
# of deaths: **349,095**

### SUMMARY OF COVID-19 SITUATION—Report # 32

**International:** The World Health Organization’s May 11, 2020 Statement on Tobacco and COVID-19 highlights that tobacco kills more than 8 million people globally every year. More than 7 million of these deaths are from direct tobacco use and around 1.2 million are due to non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke. So what does Tobacco have to do with COVID-19?

Tobacco smoking is a known risk factor for many respiratory infections and increases the severity of respiratory diseases. Studies show that smokers are more likely to develop severe disease with COVID-19, compared to non-smokers. COVID-19 is an infectious disease that primarily attacks the lungs. Smoking impairs lung function making it harder for the body to fight off coronaviruses and other diseases.

Additionally, tobacco smokers (cigarettes, waterpipes, bidis, cigars, heated tobacco products) may be more vulnerable to contracting COVID-19, as the act of smoking involves contact of fingers (and possibly contaminated cigarettes) with the lips, which increases the possibility of transmission of viruses from hand to mouth. Smoking waterpipes, also known as shisha or hookah, often involves the sharing of mouth pieces and hoses, which could facilitate the transmission of the COVID-19 virus in communal and social settings.

**Regional:** On May 28, 2020 the Office of the President of the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) shared a press release from the Office of the Chief Secretary, that RMI had allowed the repatriation of 7 of its citizens from Pohnpei to RMI on May 28, 2020. The 7 citizens were stranded in Pohnpei when RMI borders shut down on March 8, 2020. Two of the seven people were fishermen from Kwajalein who were found in Chuuk.

Even though FSM is a Covid-19 free country, RMI says it cannot take any risks, so all 7 of its citizens had to undergo COVID-19 tests in Pohnpei before departure, then again on arrival into Kwajalein and Majuro, before being placed into mandatory quarantine for the next 14 days.

**Local:** On May 28, 2020 Yap State Governor Henry Falan, members of his cabinet and the Health Crisis Taskforce members met to update each other on latest events relating to COVID-19 operations at the state and national levels.

At the State level, it was shared that the 10th Yap State Legislature (YSL) has taken the Governor to court. YSL is petitioning the court for declaratory judgement on interpretation of certain provisions of the Yap State Constitution as they relate to the Governor’s second Declaration of Public Health Emergency which went into effect on April 27, 2020 for 30 days. The YSL revoked the Emergency Declaration on April 30, 2020 stating that the initial March 27, 2020 Emergency Declaration, which expired on April 26, 2020, had “adequately addressed the emergency posed by Covid-19 to the State of Yap and found there was no basis for extending the declaration.” Yaps second Public Health Emergency Declaration expired May 28, 2020. And the FSM Public Health Emergency Declaration will expire on May 31, 2020.

Meanwhile, Yap DHS and the Health Crisis Taskforce have strongly recommended to the Governor that Yap should extend its Emergency Declaration as the State is not yet fully ready and equipped to adequately respond to COVID-19. For one, DHS is lacking the most important and basic infrastructure to deal with COVID-19 and that is alternative and separate facilities dedicated to quarantine and isolation away from the main hospital that is sustainable. DHS presently only has two functional isolation rooms at the hospital and is working on adding two more rooms to make it four but still this is not sufficient, even for regular patient use let alone COVID-19 response, based on the experiences of other countries globally once COVID-19 hits and there is an urgent need for surge in capacity.

At the National level, Governor Falan shared that discussions with the FSM President David Panuelo and the other State Governor’s in their weekly call included border opening options, relocation of CIA to Pohnpei, repatriation of stranded citizens and social distancing guidelines. On the opening up of the border, most States are not yet ready. On the repatriation of stranded citizens, the President gave the State Governor’s until the end of July 2020 to get back to him on the issue.

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 V6Al 1494 AM (Mon., Wed., Fri.) & Yap State Media and Protocol FB Page. Also check out the Wa’ab Community Health Center FB Page.