



Joint Information Center - JIC Release No. 19
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Confirmed COVID-19 Cases Moved to Isolation Facility; Guam Receives Additional Test Kits

The Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) tested 19 individuals for the virus causing COVID-19 on Friday, March 20. Two tested positive and 17 tested negative for SARS-CoV-2. This brings the total number of confirmed cases on Guam to 14. Additional results will be provided later today.

The Government of Guam is aggressively implementing its planned COVID-19 response to identify and contain transmission on Guam. With any change in status, anticipate timely notification.

Additional Diagnostic Test Kits for COVID-19 Arrive on Guam

Today, DPHSS received 200 additional COVID-19 test kits. Although DPHSS has requested additional test kits from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) multiple times, this is a demand the CDC is receiving from health departments throughout the nation. Supply is currently low. Following CDC guidelines, DPHSS has implemented testing criteria that takes this national shortage of testing kits into account. DPHSS is actively developing contingency plans to increase the amount and frequency of testing; these plans include using certified COVID-19 tests from other countries and from public and private labs in Hawaii and California. As of March 20, there are 91 public health laboratories offering testing throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, and Guam.

Patients Transported to Skilled Nursing Facility

The Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) is now equipped to isolate individuals who tested positive for the virus causing COVID-19 and whose symptoms do not require acute care. Patients temporarily in home isolation are now being transported to the SNF. Isolation protects the health and safety of the patient and the community by ensuring individuals carrying the virus receive the medical care they may need. In accordance with CDC guidelines and following examples set in states such as Hawaii, Illinois, and Massachusetts, DPHSS temporarily sent nine (9) COVID-19 positive individuals with mild symptoms into home isolation and monitored them frequently. DPHSS determined home isolation was the best intermediate option while the SNF prepared to accept these patients. Additionally, home isolation, subject to DPHSS monitoring, frees space for acute care patients, i.e. those suffering from respiratory disorders. Home isolation also lessens the potential infection of frontline health professionals.

Stop the Spread: Stay Home if Sick, Keep a Minimum of Six Feet Between You and Others

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. Do your part, and encourage others to stop the spread by:

- Staying home, especially when you are sick.
- Keeping away from others who are sick and limiting face-to-face contact with others.

- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

For more information on how to protect yourself, your family, and your community, please visit the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

Limited Government Service May Delay Replacement of Lost or Misplaced EBT Cards

DPHSS reminds recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamp Program) and Cash Assistance to safeguard their EBT cards. In the event of a complete Government of Guam shut down, the DPHSS Division of Public Welfare Benefit Issuance Section may not be able to issue replacement cards quickly if lost or misplaced. During this time of social isolation, it is important for recipients to have their EBT cards handy to purchase and stock food. For questions, please call the Bureau of Economic Security within the Division of Public Welfare at 635-7488 (Northern), 828-7542 (Southern), or 735-7344 (Castle Mall in Mangilao).

Medical Triage Hotline Numbers for COVID-19

If you are experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19, please call your healthcare provider. If a patient does not have a regular health care provider, they can call any of the Community Health Centers or the DPHSS Medical Triage Hotline Phone Numbers listed below to report symptoms and obtain guidance from clinicians:

- (671) 480-7859
- (671) 480-6760/3
- (671) 480-7883
- (671) 687-6170 (*ADA Dedicated Number*)

These numbers are operational daily, from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. and are limited to medical-related inquiries only.

For media inquiries, contact the Joint Information Center at (671) 478-0208/09/10 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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