



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Report

Palau Ministry of Health - External Situation Report

15 April 2020 - 09:00 PWT

GLOBAL SITUATION OVERVIEW

The Ministry of Health (MOH) is closely monitoring an ongoing pandemic of a coronavirus disease which is affecting over 180 countries globally. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on January 30, 2020, designated its official name as Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on February 11, 2020, and characterized it as a *pandemic* on March 12, 2020.

As of April 15, 2020:

- At least **1,973,715*** confirmed cases of COVID-19 globally, including **133** in **Guam**, **11** in the **Northern Mariana Is. (CNMI)**, **511** cases in **Hawaii**, **55** in **French Polynesia**, **18** in **New Caledonia**, **16** in **Fiji**, and **2** in **Papua New Guinea**.
- **122,805**** confirmed cases within the **Western Pacific Region**.
- **125,910*** deaths reported globally – **4,161**** deaths in the **Western Pacific Region**, **5** deaths on **Guam**, **9** in **Hawaii**, **2** in **CNMI**.
- **474,261*** people have **recovered** from COVID-19 globally.

*JHU CSSE COVID-19 Dashboard/**WHO COVID-19 Situation Report No. 85

PALAU READINESS AND RESPONSE

As of April 15, 2020:

- There are **NO SUSPECTED** or **CONFIRMED CASES** of COVID-19 in Palau.
- MOH Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activated on Jan. 22, 2020 to implement preparedness and response measures to minimize the risk of importation and potential local transmission of COVID-19 to Palau.
- Belau National Hospital (BNH) has reduced non-essential services and clinics and is prepared to receive and care for critically ill suspected cases.
- **BNH ventilators:** **2** in use, **6** available on-hand, **10** currently being procured, **18** total expected capacity.
- **Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing equipment and COVID-19 test kits arrived on Apr. 1 and biosafety cabinet and additional ventilators arrived on Apr. 9. On-island testing will commence this week. A public announcement will soon be made regarding testing criteria and process.**
- Alternative Care Site (ACS) is currently being prepared to receive and care for critically ill suspected cases.
- **MOH 24-hour COVID-19 Hotline** activated for public inquiries: **+680-488-0555**.
- Health screening continues at Palau International Airport for chartered and private aircrafts; health screening at Malakal seaport continues for incoming vessels. Screening data:
 - **Past 24 hours:** **0** flights screened, **0** travelers; **0** vessels screened, **0** travelers; **0** secondary screening.
 - **Since Jan. 23:** **167** flights screened, **15,169** travelers; **37** vessels screened, **1,330** travelers; **327** secondary screening.
- **All commercial air travel to Palau is temporary suspended as of Mar. 26 until further notice as airlines temporarily halt services. Air mail and cargo service continues on a weekly basis through chartered services.**
- Executive Order No. 437 signed on Mar. 17, 2020 urging the collaboration of all government agencies in the COVID-19 response and extends existing travel restrictions until April 30, 2020.
- MOH issued a *Certification of an Unavoidable Public Health Emergency* for COVID-19 on Mar. 17, 2020.
- MOH has conducted COVID-19 briefings with non-profit organizations including the Rotary Club of Palau.
- **Ministry of Education issued directive on Mar. 31 to extend school closures until Apr. 17, 2020 to allow for further preparations for potential COVID-19 cases.**
- The public is urged not to panic and to continue practicing public health measures to prevent respiratory infections:
 - **Hand Hygiene:** Frequent handwashing with soap and water or hand rub with **70% alcohol-based sanitizer**.
 - **Respiratory Etiquettes:** Cover cough and sneeze with clean tissue or shirt sleeve.
 - **Social Distancing:** Avoid close contact with others (at least 6 feet) and stay home if you are sick.