



Joint News Release

February 25, 2020

5:00 p.m. (ChST)

Officials Monitor Increased COVID-19 Cases in the Region

The Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS), working with local and federal partners, continues to monitor the developing situation with the 2019 novel coronavirus, abbreviated as COVID-19, to include the increase in confirmed cases in Japan and South Korea.

“We continue to monitor the latest developments. As much as we prepare for any possible outcome, we also ask the community to take extra precautions and prepare for the possibility of the novel coronavirus entering our island,” said Linda Unpingco DeNorcey, DPHSS Director.

At this time, there have been no confirmed cases of COVID-19, and there are no cases that meet the CDC criteria for a Person Under Investigation for COVID-19 in Guam. Guam is carefully assessing the situation as it evolves. With any change in status, anticipate timely notification.

Addressing Tourism Concerns

The Guam Visitors Bureau (GVB) continues to communicate closely with its overseas and local partners. Previously reported data regarding cancellations do not account for those visitors who may have or plan to rebook their travel to a later date. Most cancellations to Guam are from South Korean markets.

“This situation is changing at a rapid pace and we are adapting to it as we go. The GVB board and its management are prepared to make key decisions to support Guam’s top industry,” said Acting GVB President and CEO Bobby Alvarez.

Guam continues to follow U.S. federal regulations and will welcome travelers under those provisions. At this time, the U.S. continues to receive South Korean travelers. Alvarez added, “With all the protocols in place on federal and local levels, Guam has multiple preventative layers to help detect, report, and isolate potential cases.”

CDC Travel Health Notices

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued the following travel guidance related to COVID-19:

- South Korea — Level 3, Avoid Non Essential Travel — last updated February 24;
- China — Level 3, Avoid Non Essential Travel — last updated February 22;

- Japan — Level 2, Practice Enhanced Precautions — last updated February 22;
- Hong Kong — Level 1, Practice Usual Precautions — issued February 19.

Those planning to travel are advised to check the latest information from the following sites:

- CDC:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>
- U.S. Department of State:
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>

Prevent the Spread of All Respiratory Illnesses

While the immediate risk of this new virus to the island of Guam remains low at this time, everyone can do their part to help respond to this emerging public health threat:

- It's currently flu and respiratory disease season and CDC recommends getting a flu vaccine, taking everyday preventive actions to help stop the spread of germs, and taking flu antivirals if prescribed.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your mouth, eyes, and nose with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Practice proper cough etiquette – cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects or surfaces.
- Stay home when you are sick – do not go to work or school.

Educational print-ready materials about the prevention of respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19 are available for download, print, and distribution on the DPHSS website:

<http://dphss.guam.gov/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-n-cov/>

Stay Up to Date with Reputable Sources

It is important to note that the situation can change daily. The community is reminded to only share official notices and visit the following links for the most up-to-date information:

- CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- DPHSS website: <http://dphss.guam.gov/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-n-cov/>
- GHS/OCD website: <https://ghs.guam.gov/coronavirus>

For more information, contact DPHSS Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., at (671) 735-7154.

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