



Joint News Release
February 12, 2020
4:30 p.m. (ChST)

Guam Ready to Receive Test Kits

Earlier today, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced that the official name for the 2019 novel coronavirus is COVID-19.

As of 1:30 p.m. on February 12, 2020, the immediate health risk from novel coronavirus 2019 to the general public remains low. Guam is carefully assessing the situation as it evolves.

Earlier this month, the U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed a new laboratory kit that tests patient specimens for 2019-nCoV and began shipping these kits to U.S. domestic and select international laboratories. Guam DPHSS received confirmation from U.S. CDC that the 2019-nCoV test kits will be shipped to Guam and arriving within two weeks.

In preparation for the Coronavirus testing, the calibration of laboratory equipment at the Guam Public Health Laboratory (GPHL) located at Ran-Care Commercial Building in Tamuning was completed. Currently, all testing for 2019-nCoV is being done at the CDC in Atlanta, Georgia until the new test kits arrive on island.

“Once DPHSS receives the novel coronavirus test kits, the GPHL can conduct the testing locally in lieu of sending the specimen off-island for testing,” said DPHSS Director Linda Unpingco DeNorcey.

Guam DPHSS Pushes CDC-Sourced Educational Materials through Social Media

The public can download information from the Guam DPHSS website for news releases and materials on the novel coronavirus. These materials can be posted or shared electronically through social media and via Facebook. Additional information can also be downloaded from the Guam Homeland Security/Office of Civil Defense (GHS/OCD) website at <https://ghs.guam.gov/infographics-and-fact-sheets-coronavirus>.

DPHSS also recommends the following preventative tips:

- Frequently wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- When you cough, cover your mouth with a tissue, throw the tissue away, and then wash your hands

- Cover your mouth with the sleeve of your clothing if you do not have any tissue
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay at home if you are sick -- do not go to school or work

For Healthcare Professionals

Healthcare providers should immediately notify both infection control personnel at their facility and the Guam DPHSS in the event of a patient under investigation (PUI). Current PUI criteria can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>. Providers can also reach DPHSS to report a PUI at (671) 888-WARN.

Stay Up to Date with Reputable Sources

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/>
- Guam 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) 735-7143.

-###-