



Joint News Release
February 28, 2020
5:30 p.m. (ChST)

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Updates Evaluation Criteria

Today, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) added travel to countries with widespread or sustained transmission of COVID-19 to its criteria for determining a person under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19 disease. This means that recent travel to China, Iran, Italy, South Korea, and Japan will be a factor in evaluating patients for COVID-19.

“The U.S. CDC expanded its criteria to investigate a person for COVID-19 to better address the current global situation. Our local screening efforts will follow the updated criteria to guide evaluation of a PUI for COVID-19 as we continue to collaborate with Guam’s health care community to detect, isolate, and manage COVID-19 infections,” said DPHSS Director Linda Unpingco DeNorcey.

Currently, there are **no** confirmed cases of COVID-19, and no people who meet the CDC criteria for a PUI for COVID-19 in Guam. Guam is carefully assessing the situation as it evolves. With any change in status, anticipate timely notification.

You can find the updated “Criteria to Guide Evaluation of PUI for COVID-19” on the CDC website here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>

Take Precautions Now: Prevent the Spread of All Respiratory Illnesses

The potential public health threat posed by COVID-19 is high, globally, nationally, and to our island. The Government of Guam has been working on a daily basis with U.S. CDC and with local health care providers to prepare for the possibility that COVID-19 will be introduced into our island.

Everyone in our community can take steps now to prepare for this emerging public health threat by doing everyday preventative measures and making a plan:

- 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. However, 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.
- Make a Plan
 - Build a communication plan: How you will receive emergency alerts, how you will communicate with your household.
 - Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick. Plan where they would stay in the home to avoid infecting others, and what will be needed to care for them in your home.
 - Consider specific needs in your household: Discuss your needs and responsibilities and how people in the network can assist each other with communication, care of children, business, pets, or specific needs like the operation of durable medical equipment. Create your own personal network for specific areas where you need assistance.
 - Practice your plan with your household.

Multi-Agency Efforts Continue

As part of continued multi-agency response efforts, DPHSS is hosting a Guam Pandemic Plan Review working session on Wednesday, March 4 and Thursday, March 5, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Pacific Star Resort. The purpose of the working session is to enhance Guam’s capabilities in response to COVID-19. Media are invited to attend the opening session at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 4 with remarks from key leadership, before the technical groups break-out to tackle the work of reviewing and adapting the plan.

Guam Department of Education Clarifies COVID-19 Guidance

The Guam Department of Education (GDOE) issued additional guidance to employees and stakeholders on Friday regarding the GDOE travel prohibitions. The guidance clarified information about personal travel, medical travel, transit, and employees and students who are returning from countries with confirmed cases of COVID-19.

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>
- Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center: <https://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/program-and-policy-support/Pages/Novel-Coronavirus.aspx>

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