

PRESS RELEASE



Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Marianas Relay draws over 100 participants in support of mental health awareness

In celebration of May as Mental Health Awareness Month, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) Community Guidance Center (CGC), in collaboration with Northern Marianas Athletics and various community partners, hosted the Marianas Relay on May 29, 2021, at the Oleai Track and Field. The event promoted mental health and wellness through physical health and nutrition, by encouraging community members to take proactive steps to improving their overall health and well-being.

A total of 37 teams and over a hundred participants laced up on the track to “pass the baton” in support of mental wellness in the CNMI. The Marianas Relay was officially launched with two teams grinding and husking their way to victory in the Micronesian All Around. The 4 x 100 relay, Mixed Medley, and Community Shuttle followed respectively, featuring a combination of teams spanning the ages of 4 to 60.

Participants were also able to avail of free blood pressure and glucose screenings from the Northern Marianas College Nursing Club and program information from the Community Guidance Center and the Non-Communicable Disease Bureau (NCDB). Team incentives, raffle prizes, and refreshments were made available through the generous donations of the Tan Siu Lin Foundation, Bridge Capital LLC, Micronesian Brokers Inc, Western Sales Trading Company, D&Q International Distributors, Joeten Enterprises, Triple J Five Star Wholesale Foods Inc, Megabyte, 4Ever CNMI, Ete Cafe, and Leonisa and Ken Kato.

The camaraderie and support seen throughout the event highlighted this year’s mental health awareness campaign, as both participants and spectators joined in to cheer each other on. In addition to the close-out event, there were various other outreach and awareness activities completed during the month of May to shine a spotlight on the importance of caring for everyone’s mental health and to reinforce the message that positive mental health is essential for healthy development. Activities included a pre-recorded proclamation signing video with Gov. Ralph Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold Palacios, a 5K or 1 mile virtual run, multiple mental health campaign videos featuring different groups from our CNMI community sharing how they take care of their mental health, a Mental Health First Aid Training for adults, a Drop Everything and Reset virtual activity targeting school-aged students and their families, physical health and wellness content shared via social media, a Vibe in Color obstacle course on Rota, a 2-day 3 x 3 basketball tournament on Tinian, Zumba on both Saipan and Tinian, a coffee and paint activity for parents, and daily postings for spirit week.

Over 8,600 individuals participated in mental health awareness outreach activities on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Additionally, the robust social media campaign drew over 10,100 viewers. The activities were made possible with the support and assistance from valued community partners such as the Northern Marianas Athletics, Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc., CHCC NCDB, CNMI

Public School System's Mental Health Team, Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Division of Youth Services, Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, and the Northern Marianas College.

The strong community support for mental health awareness activities highlights the importance of continuing and sustaining mental health promotion, prevention, and intervention efforts. For more information on available behavioral health services and support, contact the Community Guidance Center at (670) 323-6560 or 6561.

The Mental Health Awareness Month events were supported through funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grants 1H79SM082964 (System of Care Program) and 1H79SM081982 (Healthy Transitions Program).

For more information about CHCC programs, follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter at @cnmichcc; visit www.chcc.gov.mp; or call (670) 234-8950.

This press release may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html>.