

HEALTH ADVISORY



Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
1 Lower Navy Hill Road, Navy Hill, Saipan, MP 96950



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“Update on Ongoing Coronavirus Outbreak; No Cases in CNMI”

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) is continuing to monitor the ongoing outbreak of a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) which began in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China, in December 2019, and which has now spread across mainland China. Over the last few weeks, cases have begun to appear globally in locations including Southeast Asia, Europe, and the mainland US. There have been over 350 deaths, with the vast majority occurring in Wuhan and other parts of mainland China. Only one death has been recorded outside of mainland China, in the Philippines.

As of this release, there are no suspected or confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV in the CNMI.

Following a proclamation by the President of the United States on January 31, 2020, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued restrictions on flights carrying passengers from mainland China. US citizens who traveled to China within 14 days of their arrival in the US will be directed to one of several airports with advanced public health screening capabilities. They will also be subject to up to 14 days of mandatory quarantine, either in a health facility or in home quarantine depending on where they traveled in China. Generally, foreign nationals (other than immediate family of US citizens, permanent residents, and flight crew) who have traveled in China within 14 days of their arrival will be denied entry into the United States.

These restrictions do apply to the CNMI, according to a press release out of the Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) on February 3, 2020.

The CHCC continues to urge the community to be vigilant. There is currently no vaccine to prevent 2019-nCoV, and the best way to protect against this and other illnesses is to take protective health and hygiene measures:

- Wash your hands often 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.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

The CHCC Public Health and Hospital Emergency Preparedness Program (PHEP) surveillance unit is working with Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), CPA, the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA), and other agencies on conducting screening of incoming passengers from outbreak areas. Protocols have been established around transportation, isolation, and care of a suspected case of 2019-nCoV, should such a case present in the CNMI.

Common symptoms of 2019-nCoV include fever, cough, and shortness of breath/difficulty breathing. If you or anyone you know has traveled to Wuhan or anywhere else in mainland China within the last 14 days, or have been in close contact with an individual with confirmed 2019-nCoV, please call the CHCC (670)234-8950 and ask for the PHEP surveillance unit. Before you go to the doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your recent travel and any symptoms you are having.

In order to provide the CNMI public with updated information and resources, the CHCC has created a dedicated page on our website (www.chcc.gov.mp) with resources and information about the 2019-nCoV outbreak: www.chcc.gov.mp/coronavirusinformation.php.

For more information about CHCC programs, please follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

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

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