

HEALTH ADVISORY



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
GOVERNOR'S COVID-19 TASK FORCE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 18, 2020

**One new COVID-19 confirmed case in the CNMI
First case to be confirmed at CHCC Laboratory**

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres, the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) announced on Saturday the confirmation of one (1) new COVID-19 case, bringing CNMI's total confirmed case count to 14.

This new case of COVID-19, a 57-year-old male, is in stable condition. This case is being closely monitored by CHCC medical teams. CHCC has already initiated contact tracing for the most immediate contacts (close family members, friends, and associates) of this new confirmed case. CHCC continues to work with the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force to expand designated isolation areas to closely monitor the well-being of individuals with symptoms.

Unlike previous testing conducted at Guam Public Health Laboratory, this new case was confirmed at CHCC Laboratory using a newly acquired testing device - ID NOW by Abbott/Alere. The ID NOW COVID-19 assay is now available for use under the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Emergency Use Authorization (EUA).

The ID NOW COVID-19 rapid test delivers high-quality molecular positive results in as little as five (5) minutes, targeting the coronavirus (COVID-19) RdRp Gene. CHCC extends its gratitude to the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for their purchase of this testing device. Please note that while CHCC is very fortunate to have this system to enable healthcare professionals to make appropriate and more efficient treatment and infection control decisions, CHCC will use this system in accordance with the HHS testing strategy listed below.

As of April 17, 2020, the CNMI has submitted 62 specimens for COVID-19 testing to **Guam Public Health Laboratory**. All 62 have been processed, resulting in 13 positive specimens, 49 negative specimens. Through the ID NOW by Abbott/Alere in-house testing at the **CHCC Laboratory**, three (3) specimens have been processed, resulting in one (1) positive specimen, two (2) negative specimens.

Demographics of Positive Cases			
Age Category (Yrs.)	Male	Female	Total
0-4	0	0	0
5-19	0	1	1
20-49	3	1	4
50-64	4	3	7
65+	1	1	2
Total	8	6	14

Guide to understanding COVID-19 testing

There are different tests for COVID-19, and more tests are being developed every day. To decide which test to use, medical providers must factor in the circumstance of the patient, the availability of these test types, the characteristics and limitations of the test, and whether the test is FDA approved.

Who gets tested?

At this time, providers are using the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) COVID-19 Testing Strategy. This prioritizes testing for:

Priority 1

- Patients and healthcare facility workers with symptoms at the hospital or alternate care sites

Priority 2

- Patients in long-term care facilities with symptoms
- Patients 65 years of age or older with symptoms
- Patients with underlying conditions with symptoms
- First responders with symptoms

Priority 3

- Critical infrastructure workers with symptoms
- Individuals who do not meet any of the above categories with symptoms
- Healthcare facility workers and first responders
- Individuals with mild symptoms in communities experiencing high numbers of COVID-19 hospitalizations.

STAY AT HOME, STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Pick up food through drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options.
- Only one healthy adult from the household should run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklist-household-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene:

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic:

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
 - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
 - Washing 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.
 - Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Limiting visitors

The CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, please contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046 This number is available Monday to Sunday 7:00AM-7:00PM

For medical information about COVID-19, please reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1542/1672/1352/1854 These numbers are available Monday to Sunday 7:30AM-8:00PM

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis please call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856/1857 These numbers are available Monday to Friday 7:30AM-4:30PM.

For more information about DIY face coverings, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

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

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, please follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

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

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Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Point of Contact:

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