

HEALTH ADVISORY



Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation

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



October 4, 2019

CHCC-PR-20-002

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

"CHCC Continues to Monitor Dengue Outbreaks in Neighboring Islands, and Urges the Community to Remain Vigilant"

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) continues to monitor the dengue outbreaks in neighboring Pacific islands, and urges the community to remain vigilant. With the total number of cases on Guam now at 12, with eight locally acquired in Guam (as of October 2, 2019), we are on heightened alert in the CNMI.

For those planning to travel off-island, please use insect repellent and dress appropriately when outdoors to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes while off-island and for at least TWO WEEKS after returning to the CNMI. Only one in four people who are infected with dengue will develop symptoms, but infected people without any symptoms can still be bitten by mosquitoes and pass on the infection to another person, so it is important to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes when returning to the CNMI until there is no chance of passing on the virus. If you develop any fever, chills, pain behind the eyes, rash, nausea, vomiting, or joint pain, please see your doctor right away. All travelers returning to the CNMI from an area with a dengue outbreak are being advised at customs to protect against mosquito bites for at least two weeks, and are being given educational material to take home.

Working together with the Saipan Mayor's Office, Bureau of Environmental & Coastal Quality, Department of Public Lands, and Zoning Office, the CHCC Bureau of Environmental Health (BEH) has begun inspecting residential properties to help eradicate mosquito breeding sites. The inspections started in areas worst-affected by Typhoon Yutu, and are being conducted on a weekly basis on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, as well as Saturdays as needed. Inspections are currently being conducted in Koblerville, and will move northwards towards Afetna and San Antonio from there. The BEH deploys 2-3 person teams, and you can identify them by the bright green or yellow vests they wear.

The BEH would like to stress that the purpose of the inspections is not to cite residents, but to help identify problem areas where mosquitoes may breed, assist in resolving the problem, and providing educational information on clean up and mosquito prevention to residents. They will also refer residents to appropriate services and agencies as necessary for further assistance.

Remember, the best way to protect yourself and your family against dengue is to Fight the Bite! Avoid being bitten by mosquitoes and eliminate mosquito breeding areas in and around your home.

- Use insect repellent. Make sure to read product instructions, as many repellents are not safe to use on young children.
- Cover up! Wear long sleeves and pants when possible, and cover cribs and strollers with mosquito netting.
- Put screens on windows and doors, and make sure screens do not have any holes.
- Mosquitoes bite during the day, but are most active right before sunrise and sunset. Close your doors and windows during these times and use aircon if possible.

For more information on dengue, please contact the CHCC Emergency Preparedness Program at (670)234-8950 or visit www.cdc.gov/dengue.

For more information on how to control mosquitoes, or about the inspections, please contact the Bureau of Environmental Health at 670-664-4870/2/3 or email john.tagabuel@dph.gov.mp.

For more information about CHCC programs, please follow us on Facebook and 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/index.php/press-releases>

CHCC Point of Contact:

Zoe Travis, *Communications and Public Relations Specialist*

(670) 234-8950 Ext. 3359, communications@chcc.gov.mp