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Statement from the President

March 4, 2020

On March 3, 2020, the Ministry of Health announced that a US healthworker with flu symptoms was admitted to Belau National Hospital. In light of the concerns over the international coronavirus situation, emergency protocols were enacted BUT the patient has NOT tested positive for the illness.

Palau takes all public health risks seriously and we are working closely with the United Nations World Health Organization (UN-WHO), the United States Centers for Disease Control (US-CDC) with assistance and support from the Republic of China, Taiwan and Taiwan Centers for Disease Control (TW-CDC) to determine IF the patient is infected and to ensure the highest-level response possible.

At this time, there is no indication that the coronavirus is responsible for the patient's symptoms or that the community has been exposed to the virus. Still, as the MOH reminds us, it is always wise to practice common-sense personal hygiene: Cover cough and sneeze with a clean tissue or your sleeve and wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water, or at least 70% alcohol-based sanitizer.

There is no indication at this point that the patient is suffering from anything other than the common cold. We will provide the latest information as information becomes available. Palau and our partners at the CDC are equipped to manage the situation should the patient receive a positive test. As in so many situations like this, fear—not a germ—is our biggest enemy.”

Sincerely,

Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr.
President of the Republic of Palau