Republic of Palau

Ministry of Health

P. O. Box 6027   Koror, Republic of Palau 96940
phone: (680) 488-2552 or 2553   fax: (680) 488-1211
email: administration@palauhealth.org   website: www.palauhealth.org

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CONTACT: Ministry of Health Public Information Officer
Tel: +680-775-1138 Fax: +680-488-1211
Email: edolem.ikerdeu@palauhealth.org

OUTBOUND TRAVELER TESTS NEGATIVE FOR COVID-19 AFTER A SECOND LABORATORY TEST

September 21, 2020

On September 17, 2020 the Ministry of Health (MOH) activated investigation, contact tracing, and testing protocols after receiving communication from a local contractor that an employee traveling out of Palau last week had tested positive of COVID-19 upon arrival at destination. This individual had been residing and working in Palau since December 2019 and has no known contact with any confirmed COVID-19 case and has no recent travel history out of the country. MOH had tested all known contacts in Palau, and all results were negative.

Updates:
- Per request from MOH Emergency Operations Center, the outbound traveler took another RT-PCR COVID-19 test from a different lab certified by the Republic of the Philippines Department of Health. Specimen was collected from both the back of the nose and throat (nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal), and results were negative. This means that the first test result was a false positive, and therefore that individual has been released from quarantine.
- The Bureau of Public Health/MOH remains in communication with the WHO International Health Regulations (IHR) Office, the Philippines IHR National Focal Point and other regional advisors to determine other details that may warrant additional measures.

The public's health and safety remain our priority, and although we have not confirmed a COVID-19 case in Palau, we continue to urge the public to practice preventive measures including proper and frequent handwashing, respiratory etiquette, cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, isolating from others when sick and calling the Hospital for advice. These measures not only prevent COVID-19 but also other infectious diseases.

If you have any questions or need further information on quarantine or testing for COVID-19, please contact the MOH EOC Deputy Incident Commander/Liaison Officer, Mr. Gaafar Uherbelau at 775-1310.