



# HEALTH IN FOCUS

New Year 2019 | Issue 2

Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation

## GET TO KNOW THE BOARD

Meet Lauri Ogumoro  
Chairperson, CHCC Board of Trustees



Lauri Ogumoro is the Chairperson for the CHCC Board of Trustees and brings a wealth of health systems knowledge and experience to CHCC. As a former CHC employee, Chairperson Ogumoro worked in numerous capacities. She supported CHC patients as a Medical Social Worker throughout the hospital and oversaw the development of the hemodialysis center, to name just a few of her roles. She also was instrumental in obtaining grant funding to train the first cohort of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) and established the Victim Health Project. These combined experiences allowed her to value not only the critical need for the CHCC to comply with federal health regulations, but also the importance of the entire health system providing quality and compassionate health care services.

As the Chairperson, Ms. Ogumoro brings this knowledge to lead the Board in supporting CHCC to achieve 3 essential goals:

1. Maintain accreditation from the US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).
2. Ensure CHCC receives clean financial audits, annually.

3. Increase health care financing and revenue to address uncompensated care and increase services.

As the Executive Director for Karidat, a Catholic Charities Agency, she leads a team who have been supporting the most vulnerable in the CNMI. Leveraging her passion for human dignity, she also places a strong emphasis on the immense value to CHCC from its workforce. "We have great people who show up every day to give their best to CHCC and CNMI. We need to keep investing in them."

Looking ahead to 2019, Chairperson Ogumoro is excited about CHCC's opportunities to increase services, continue to recruit quality staff, and keep moving the needle on health system improvements in Rota and Tinian, striking that balance between doing things right and doing the right things.

## IMPROVING ACCESS TO RX

With telecommunications capacity improving in the CNMI, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) plans to extend full pharmacy services to the island health centers on Tinian and Rota through telepharmacy.

Telepharmacy is a way for a pharmacist to oversee pharmacy operations and provide patient care services without having to be physically present. When fully operational, a pharmacist on Saipan will supervise the on-site pharmacy technicians on Tinian and Rota, performing regular pharmacist duties from Saipan, including providing private consultations to patients on Tinian and Rota via live video. "Telepharmacy services on Tinian and Rota will function much like any other pharmacy where patients can walk in to pick up refills, speak privately

with a pharmacist, and use their health insurance plan, without needing to see their doctor each time," says CHCC pharmacy director Rodylyn Bacani.



Bacani at the CHCC's outpatient pharmacy on Saipan

Recruiting health care professionals to the Tinian and Rota health centers is a perennial challenge, and the estimated volume of prescriptions on each island independently could not sustain a traditional pharmacy. As a result, prescription drugs have only been available through physician dispensing at the health centers. Better access to drug education and prescriptions on Tinian and Rota via telepharmacy have great potential to improve health outcomes for Tinian and Rota residents.

A recent grant award made possible by the USDA's Distance Learning and Telemedicine program will provide the hardware and software needed to implement the telepharmacy service. After the three-year grant period is complete, telepharmacy on Tinian and Rota is expected to generate enough revenue to sustain the cost of operations moving forward.

## POST-DISASTER MENTAL HEALTH

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC), Community Guidance Center (CGC) was awarded the Immediate Services Program (ISP) FEMA grant, which is a Crisis Counseling Program (CCP) grant program for disaster relief assistance.

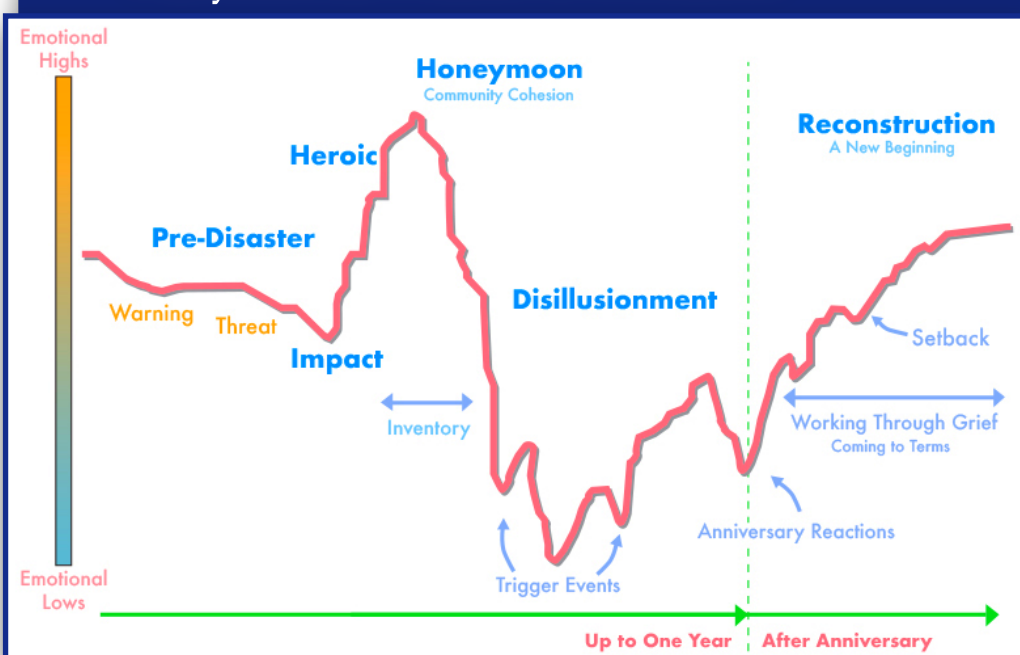
Six staff members have been hired on Rota to offer crisis support services for the aftermath of Typhoon Mangkhut; seven staff members have been hired for Tinian; and sixteen staff members have been hired for Saipan for Typhoon Yutu. Each island has hired staff members residing on their respective islands to better provide crisis counseling and support where it's most needed. The CCP team has been trained by FEMA CCP Trainer, Mr. Wayne Law on the Core Content Training. The Core Content Training is a two-day training that covers basic crisis counseling skills and services, data collection, and stress management techniques. The CCP outreach workers go house to house to check in on individuals and families and provide support, resources and coping skills. Workers also make referrals if needed to services at the Community Guidance Center (CGC).

Please contact Community Guidance Center (CGC) at 323-6560/1 to make an appointment for counseling or for additional information.

### Did you know?

Now, more than two months post-Yutu, it's common for CNMI residents to experience the "disillusionment phase" of disaster recovery. During this phase, survivors go through a process where they recognize the limits of available disaster assistance and become physically exhausted due to enormous

### Psychosocial Phases of a Disaster



multiple demands, financial pressures, and the stress of relocation or living in a damaged home. This is an important time to attend to mental health needs. Contact 323-6560/1 to schedule a free visit with a crisis counselor, or call the national Disaster Distress Helpline (24 hours) at 1-800-985-5990.

Learn more about the psychosocial phases of a disaster at <https://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/recovering-disasters/phases-disaster>

## HEALTHY NEW YEAR



**Make a resolution to host healthier gatherings in 2019. Use these simple tricks at parties to help your loved ones make healthy choices.**

Put colorful vegetable and fruit dishes at the front of the buffet line to encourage your guests to fill their plates with nutritious foods first.

Put less colorful brown and white foods such as meats and simple carbohydrate dishes, like white rice or pasta, at the end of the line with a smaller serving spoon.



Serve only unsweetened soft drinks such as coconut water, unsweetened tea, coffee and 100% fruit juice. Infuse a water jug with flavor by adding slices of lemon, lime, cucumber, or herbs like mint, basil, or rosemary. Get creative!

Set up a "mocktail" station with attractive non-alcoholic alternatives, such as alcohol-free mojitos, to encourage guests to cut back on alcohol consumption.



Avoid Styrofoam plates, bowls and cups. Use paper or reusable dishware instead. Skip the plastic and use washable cutlery. Reducing harmful waste makes a healthier CNMI for everyone.

Plan games for guests that encourage physical activity like bean bag toss, a scavenger hunt, or musical chairs.

## TYPHOON YUTU RESPONSE



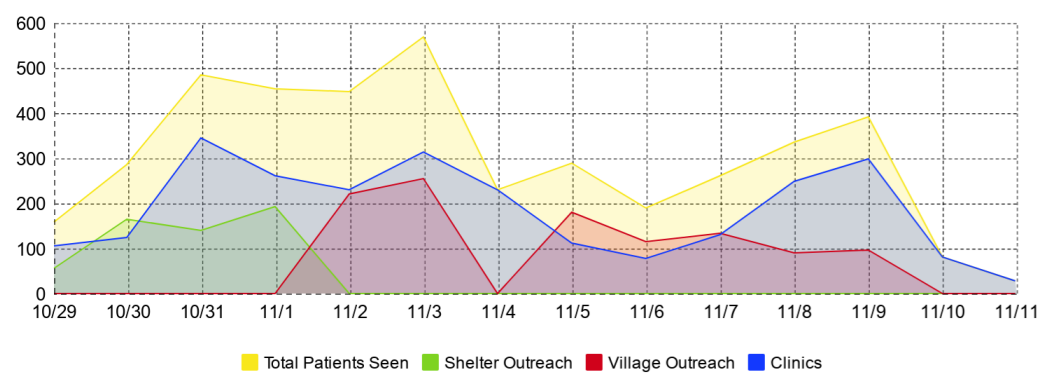
Clockwise from top left: A team rubicon medical provider listens to health concerns of a Tinian resident; a Meena Benavente original art piece hangs in front of the temporary San Antonio clinic; Young shelter residents show off their immunizations; CHCC's Rochell Ermitanio tends to a patient's foot at outreach clinic; CHCC volunteers and young volunteer translators take a break for a photo at the San Antonio clinic; health assessment volunteers speak with residents about their health needs; Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers stop for a photo with donated supplies; a sample of the hygiene kits that were distributed to shelterees; children test a hand washing station at a shelter.

members suffering great personal losses at home, all of the CHCC's medical units on Saipan were fully operational within four days of the storm. Through medical outreach efforts to emergency shelters, satellite clinics, and village outreach, the CHCC and its partners saw more than 3,700 patients at outreach in the 14 days after typhoon Yutu. The CHCC thanks its partners for making immediate disaster medical relief possible for our residents.

Thanks to proper planning and a dedicated team, hospital and emergency department services at the CHCC were uninterrupted by Typhoon Yutu. Despite many staff

members suffering great personal losses at home, all of the CHCC's medical units on Saipan were fully operational within four days of the storm. Through medical outreach efforts to emergency shelters, satellite clinics, and village outreach, the CHCC and its partners saw more than 3,700 patients at outreach in the 14 days after typhoon Yutu. The CHCC thanks its partners for making immediate disaster medical relief possible for our residents.

### 3,720 PATIENTS SEEN IN TWO WEEKS POST-YUTU



#### Partners in disaster medical relief

- US Dept. of Health and Human Services:
  - ASPR (Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response)
  - US Public Health Service
  - Disaster Medical Assistance Team
- World Health Organization - Western Pacific Regional Office
- Americares - Mass General Hospital Global Disaster Relief
- Team Rubicon USA
- Guam Medical Provider Community
- Samaritan's Purse

## FUNDING AWARDED FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, PUBLIC HEALTH DENTAL PROGRAM, AND ELECTRONIC VITAL REGISTRATION SYSTEM

The Division of Public Health Services (DPHS), Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) was recently awarded a grant #1H84MC32237 from the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA), an agency within the US Dept of Health and Human Services (HHS), to implement a Family to Family Health Information Center in the Northern Mariana Islands. The goal of this federally-funded program is to promote optimal health for children and youth with special healthcare needs (CYSHCN) by helping families and health professionals partner in health care decision-making and facilitating access to needed health and related services. The initial project year will consist of a comprehensive needs assessment on the system of care and services available to CYSHCN and their families ultimately culminating in the development of a plan to establish a Health Information Center to meet the needs of CYSHCN and their families.

DPHS/MCHB received a second grant #6T12HP31858 from Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) to support the development and

implementation of innovative programs to address the dental workforce needs of the CNMI and increase the availability of oral health services for CNMI residents. This federal financial support will allow for the hiring of additional dental clinic staff, doubling the DPHS Dental Clinic workforce from six to twelve. Additionally, the grant will support the hiring of a dental assistant on Tinian and Rota and will enable the expansion of preventive oral health services, such as the Sealant Program, for children and pregnant women.

The CHCC's Health and Vital Statistics Office (HVSO) was awarded funding from the CDC's National Centers for Health Statistics (NCHS) to electronically and securely transmit death and birth information to the NCHS. The system will greatly improve the timeliness and quality of vital events information collected and reported to NCHS. NCHS is responsible for generating the national health status report. The system increases security and fraud prevention and enables CNMI to participate in the information exchange with State and Federal Agency partners.