Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Protect yourself against COVID-19 during the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games

From June 17 – 25, 2022, the CNMI will host the 2022 Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games (NMPMG), bringing in more than 1,800 visitors from around the Pacific. While the CNMI is at COVID-19 Community Level Low, the influx of visitors presents an opportunity for an increase in transmission.

"While we have a high vaccination rate here in the CNMI and a supply of COVID-19 therapeutics, we should act with precaution as we are seeing a slight increase in COVID-19 community cases," said CHCC Chief Executive Officer Esther L. Muña. "Let's enjoy the games as safely and responsibly as possible."

Efforts to mitigate COVID-19 transmission conducted before, during, and after the period of the NMPMG include daily self-swab antigen COVID-19 testing by participants, establishing hand-washing stations at all venue areas, environmental health inspections and implementation of mitigation efforts for identified deficits, and promotion of good handwashing and other healthy behaviors.

Attending a gathering or an event increases your chances of being in close contact with people outside your household and being exposed to COVID-19. Individuals who are considered immunocompromised or at high risk of severe illnesses should avoid crowded places where they cannot stay 6 feet away from others.

Consider using a self-test before joining gatherings with others who do not live in your household. If you come into close contact with someone with COVID-19:
- Get tested 5 days after your last close contact
- Monitor your symptoms
- Tell your close contacts that they may have been exposed to COVID-19 so they can quarantine, get tested, and wear a well-fitting mask

Stay home and do not attend gatherings if you test positive, even if you do not have symptoms.

Stay home and do not attend gatherings if you are sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

If you want to spend time with people who do not live with you, outdoors is the safer choice. You are less likely to be exposed to COVID-19 during outdoor activities, even without the use of masks. Good ventilation can help prevent you from getting and spreading COVID-19.

Residents of the CNMI who test positive for COVID-19 on a self-administered test <u>may be eligible for treatment</u> by reporting their positive test result online at www.staysafecnmi.com/self-reporting within 5 days of the test result date. Residents requesting COVID-19 treatment should fill out the medical questionnaire in the form to get assessed as soon as possible. After reporting online, a CHCC representative will be in contact for next steps should a person be eligible for treatment.

COVID-19 very contagious and has since spread globally, creating a pandemic. COVID-19 most often causes respiratory symptoms that can feel much like a cold, a flu, or pneumonia, and may attack more than your lungs and respiratory system.

Most people with COVID-19 have mild symptoms, but some people become severely ill. Older adults and people who have certain underlying medical conditions are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Consider getting vaccinated if you are not yet vaccinated against COVID-19 or getting a booster shot. Unvaccinated individuals are at risk of serious illness from COVID-19. Vaccines are the best protection against the highly transmissible virus and are readily available at the CHCC Immunization Clinic, Monday to Saturday, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.; but on Wednesdays, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Call (670) 236-8745 for more information.

If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms like coughing, fever, shortness of breath, or new loss of taste or smell, get checked by a health care provider right away, or call the CHCC Tele-Triage line (670) 233-2067 if you do not have a provider.

If you are not experiencing COVID-19 symptoms but are looking to get tested for COVID-19, avail of the free Community-Based Testing by registering at https://covidtesting.chcc.health.

While you wait to get tested or get your test results, live COVID-19 safe: wear a mask, wash your hands, watch your distance, stay at home as much as possible, limit your contact with others, clean or disinfect surfaces frequently, monitor your symptoms, and cover coughs/sneezes.

<u>**Follow the 3 W's**</u>
Wear a mask when around other people, if you prefer to. People can wear a mask based on personal preference, informed by personal level of risk. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily

available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Watch your distance. Stay 6 feet away from others. Inside your home, avoid close contact with people who are sick, and if possible, maintain 6 feet between the person who is sick and other household members. Outside your home, stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arm's length) from other people, especially if you are at higher risk of getting sick.

Stay home as much as possible, limit your contact with others

If you have been in close contact with someone who has or is suspected to have COVID-19, it is possible that you are also infected even if you do not feel sick.

You **quarantine** when you might have been exposed to the virus and may or may not have been infected. You **isolate** when you have been infected with the virus, even if you do not have symptoms.

Self-quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed, or were potentially exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. Quarantine if you have been in close contact (within 6 feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone who has COVID-19, **unless you are up to date with your COVID-19 vaccination or had confirmed COVID-19 within the past 90 days**.

People who are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccination do NOT need to quarantine after contact with someone who had COVID-19, unless they are experiencing symptoms. However, people should get tested 5-7 days after their exposure, even if they do not experience symptoms; and should wear a mask indoors or in public for 10 days following their exposure or until their test result is negative.

Monitor your health daily for 10 days after your exposure, especially watching out for fever (100.4 F), cough, shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell, or other COVID-19 symptoms. If possible, stay away from people you live with, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19.

Everyone in your household should practice good hygiene measures to protect each other. It is important that everyone is taking an active role in illness prevention. Practice the 3 W's as much as possible: wear a mask, wash your hands, and watch your distance.

Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Disinfect all high-touch surfaces every day. Monitor your health daily for 10 days after your first sign of symptoms or first date of positive test result, especially watching out for fever (100.4 F), cough, shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell, or other COVID-19 symptoms.

While in quarantine, take care of your mental health. Life during the threat of COVID-19 can lead to feelings of anxiety, and staying connected to friends and family via phone calls or social media may help boost your mood and protect your physical and mental health.

For mental health support and coping skills, call (670) 284-0843 or 284-0847, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Testing positive
If you test positive on any COVID-19 test (Community-Based Testing, antigen testing, or at home), stay home for at least 5 days and isolate from others.

Residents of the CNMI who test positive for COVID-19 on a self-administered test may be eligible for treatment by reporting their positive test result online at www.staysafecnmi.com/self-reporting within 5 days of the test result date. Residents requesting COVID-19 treatment should fill out the medical questionnaire in the form to get assessed as soon as possible.

You may also obtain a quarantine completion certificate by reporting your positive test result at www.staysafecnmi.com/self-reporting within 5 days of your test result. You will need to upload a photo of your test result or test result documentation. Employers may use this as documentation of their employee's positive test result. If employers or employees require additional documentation, they must seek documentation from their healthcare provider.

After 5 days, do a self-check on how you are feeling. If you have no symptoms or your symptoms are improving, you can end isolation and should wear a well-fitted mask around others for an additional 5 days. If your symptoms are not improving or you still have a fever, continue to stay home until 24 hours after your fever stops without using fever-reducing medication and your symptoms have improved. After you feel completely better, keep wearing a mask around other people at home and in public through day 10.

The date of your exposure is considered day 0. Day 1 is the first full day after your last contact with a person who has had COVID-19. Stay home and away from other people for at least 5 days.

If you are positive with COVID-19, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home as much as possible. You should also use a separate bathroom, if available. You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding. After using these items, wash them thoroughly with soap and water. If you determine that your living arrangement is not suitable for isolation, you may be request to isolate in the designated government facility.

When to seek emergency medical attention
Look for emergency warning signs* for COVID-19. If someone is showing any of these signs, seek emergency medical care immediately:
- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest

- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone

*This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

Call 911 or call ahead to your local emergency facility. Notify the operator that you are seeking care for someone who has or may have COVID-19.

How to care for someone with COVID-19
It is possible to safely care for someone with COVID-19 at home, but careful precautions must be taken.

Maintain separation at home. Place the person under investigation in a well-ventilated room of the house, if possible. Avoid visitors. If it is not possible to keep the

Clean your hands often and wear a face covering. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Tell everyone in the home to do the same, especially after being near the person who is sick. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands

Provide support and help cover their basic needs. Help the person who is sick to follow their health care provider's instructions for care and medicine, including over the counter and prescription medications. Help them with grocery shopping, filling prescriptions, and getting other items they may need.

Watch for warning signs. Always look for emergency warning signs, such as trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, or bluish lips or face. Please call your health care provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you. Call 911 if an emergency is occurring and notify the operator that you are seeking care for someone who has or may have COVID-19.

Eat in separate rooms or areas. Stay separated as much as possible. Wash dishes and utensils using gloves, hot water, and soap. Wash your hands after taking off the gloves of handling used items.

Avoid sharing personal items. Do not share anything with a person suspected of having COVID-19.

Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces every day. This can include tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, and electronics. Clean the area or item with soap and water or a household disinfectant.

Monitor your own health. Caregivers and close contacts should monitor their health for COVID-19 symptoms. Symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath but other symptoms may be present as well. Trouble breathing is a more serious warning sign that you need medical attention.

Click here for more information on how to protect yourself and others, and here for more information on self-quarantine and self-isolation.

Call our contact tracers if you have concerns regarding a possible exposure to a positive case at (670) 287-1671, 287-1672, or 287-1683, available every day, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; after hours, call (670) 286-1711 or 286-1706.

For mental health support and coping skills, call (670) 284-0843 or 284-0847, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, call the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Infoline at (670) 488-0211, available every day, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m., or visit www.staysafecnmi.com.

If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911.

For more information about CHCC programs, follow @cnmichcc on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter; visit http://www.chcc.health; or call (670) 234-8950.

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