



Ministry of Health & Human Services

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MHHS PILOTS COVID-19 TESTING AT THE PALAU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, ONE TRAVELER IDENTIFIED AS A PROBABLE CASE OF COVID-19

On August 29, 2021, the Ministry of Health and Human Services (MHHS), with Border Control partners, launched its COVID-19 testing of international travelers arriving at the Palau International Airport, as part of the nation's mitigation efforts to reduce or prevent local COVID-19 transmission.

Of the one hundred and twenty (120) inbound travelers tested using the Binax Ag (antigen) at the airport upon arrival, there was one probable case of COVID-19, and the traveler was isolated. Additional tests including PCR GeneXpert, Abbot ID Now, and Binax Ag (antigen) were conducted, and all results came back negative of COVID-19. However, out of an abundance of caution, the traveler will remain in isolation and will undergo further confirmatory testing and evaluation after twenty-four (24) hours. Close contacts have been advised to self-quarantine pending final test results. Both traveler and close contact will be released from isolation and self-quarantine, respectively, if final test results are negative. MHHS will provide updates as information becomes available.

Per protocol, all inbound travelers are subject to COVID-19 testing on the first (1st) and fifth (5th) day following arrival in Palau. To quickly identify and prevent the potential spread of COVID-19 in the community, MHHS instituted day 1 testing at the airport. Travelers get tested as soon as they deplane before going through immigration and customs. Their tests are processed and results become available before leaving the airport. All travelers are placed on restriction of movement (ROM) for five days before undergoing final testing on day 5.

MHHS continues to remind everyone to take every action to minimize the potential spread of COVID-19.

- Get vaccinated
- Wash your hands frequently
- Wear a mask as appropriate
- Consider limiting large indoor gatherings and practice physical distancing, 3-6 feet apart
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and spaces
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Stay home, away from others and call the Hospital for advice if you are sick

Once again, we thank the community for its support to all COVID-19 response activities.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact the MHHS EOC Incident Commander Ms. Ritter Udui at 775-0084 or the MHHS Deputy Incident Commander/Liaison Officer, Mr. Gaafar Uherbelau at 775-1310. For other COVID-19 related information, call the MHHS COVID-19 Hotline at 488-0555.