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PRESS RELEASE

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MOH RECEIVES NOTIFICATION OF COVID-19 POSITIVE CASES FROM A VISITING TAIWAN VESSEL BACK IN MARCH

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On Saturday, April 18, 2020, Palau's Minister of Health Dr. Emais Roberts received notification from Republic of China - Taiwan officials informing him that three (3) cadets who visited Palau during a March 12-15, 2020 goodwill visit had tested positive for COVID-19.

"There is little chance that the virus on the vessel came from Palau," Minister of Health, Dr. Emais Roberts said. "It has been over a month since their visit, and precautionary measures were taken at every event involving the cadets here in Palau."

To date, 24 cadets from the same vessel have tested positive for COVID-19, and reports from Taiwan Ministry of Health indicate that the cases are most likely 'ship cluster', contained within that particular vessel. There is no reason for us in Palau to panic. Since that time, there have been no reported cases at Palau's hospital of patients with correlating symptoms.

The Ministry of Health has protocols in place for contact tracing, and at the moment, the Bureau of Public Health (BPH) is in communication with the Taiwan International Health Regulations (IHR) National Focal Point (NFP) Office as they conduct their investigation. Based on the results of such investigation, BPH activates its surveillance and contact tracing mechanisms, to identify and test contacts and isolate if there are any positive cases.

The public is urged to continue to practice preventive measures including frequent and proper handwashing, coughing/sneezing etiquette, and physical distancing (6 feet away from others).

If you are experiencing symptoms (fever, cough, difficulty breathing, or flu-like symptoms), please stay away from others and call your doctor or the Hospital OPD at 488-2555 or the ER at 488-2558 (after hours) for further guidance.