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PALAU RECEIVES FIRST ALLOCATION OF COVID-19 VACCINE

January 2, 2021

The Ministry of Health (MOH) is pleased to inform the public that the first allocation of COVID-19 vaccines for Palau arrived early Saturday morning, January 2, 2021 via chartered cargo flight. MOH received the vaccines at the Palau International Airport and transported them safely for storage at Belau National Hospital. Included in this shipment were 2,800 doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine and accompanying ancillary kits (syringes, masks, and face shields).

Vaccination will commence on Sunday, January 3, 2021 at the Belau National Hospital. With the limited amount of vaccine doses received, MOH shall administer the vaccine according to priority groups, starting with health care providers and first responders, key officials and decision makers, followed by vulnerable populations (elderly of 75 years old and over and people with underlying medical conditions). These individuals will be informed to come in for vaccination at MOH and other designated points of dispensing (PODS) in the next several days. MOH expects to receive more vaccines in the upcoming months and will continue to conduct public education as well as inform everyone on vaccination schedules and target groups.

The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine received was granted emergency use authorization from the US FDA on December 18, 2020. It is a two-dose regimen vaccine that is currently approved for people 18 years and older. Individuals must receive both doses within a 28-day interval to receive maximum protection against COVID-19.

Along with the other US-affiliated Pacific Islands (USAPI), Palau is receiving COVID-19 vaccines from the US through the Operation Warp Speed initiative with allocations determined based on population size.

We appeal to the community for patience and understanding as we work together to vaccinate our most vulnerable population in the upcoming weeks. If you have any questions or need further information on the COVID-19 vaccination campaign, please contact the MOH EOC Deputy Incident Commander Mr. Gaafar Uherbelau at 775-1310 or the MOH EOC Public Information Officer, Ms. Edolem Ikerdeu at 775-1138.