On Friday, December 7, 2018, the Palau Ministry of Health alerted the public of an outbreak of dengue fever following the first ever laboratory confirmation of two cases with dengue serotype 3. This poses a significant concern for public health as the whole population is potentially vulnerable to infection.

In response to the outbreak, the Ministry of Health activated its emergency response team on December 7, 2018. The team has been tasked with raising community awareness of the outbreak and dengue prevention measures, conducting disease surveillance and reporting, strengthening mosquito control measures, and ensuring adequate resources are available to combat the outbreak. Between April 1 – 7, 2019, there were 9 new lab-confirmed cases reported. This brings the total from December 1, 2018 to April 7, 2019 to 150 cases.

There have been no reported deaths attributed to dengue infection during this outbreak.

Outbreak Overview

Demographics

- Age range = 0 – 88 years
- Mean age = 30 years
- Median age = 26 years
- Male:Female ratio = 121
- The majority of cases during this outbreak have been Palauan.

Symptom Profile of Cases

- # of Cases with Each Symptom (Cases with available data = 143)
- Fever: 141 cases
- Headache: 136 cases
- Body pain: 128 cases
- Joint pain: 82 cases
- Loss of appetite: 64 cases
- Altered taste sensation: 50 cases
- Nausea: 44 cases
- Vomiting: 27 cases
- Cough: 18 cases
- Abdominal pain: 15 cases
- Eye pain: 8 cases
- Rash: 2 cases

Cases by State and Koror Hamlets

- 2019
- 2018
- Total
- Median age = 30 years
- Mean age = 26 years
- Male:Female = 121
- Age range = 0 – 88 years

Dengue Cases by Gender and Age Group

Epi Curve

Lab Testing

- The Belau National Hospital (BNH) Laboratory and 3 private clinics on-island continue to screen symptomatic patients for dengue with a rapid diagnostic test kit.
- The BNH Lab continues to send serum specimens to Hawaii State Laboratory (HSL) for confirmation and serotyping.
- There have been 62 serotyped cases of DENV-3. The last recorded cases of DENV-2 were in November of 2018.

Response Measures

- The dengue outbreak response team is continuing efforts to increase community awareness on the dengue outbreak and prevention measures through:
  - Weekly radio talk shows at the national radio station
  - Dissemination of print material about dengue prevention to the community
  - Development of dengue prevention videos for public consumption that target young adults
  - Utilizing public forums to spread the prevention message.
  - The Ministry of Health Management team will continue to attend presidential state visits to spread the dengue prevention message.
  - The Ministry of Health team will also continue to attend parent-teacher association meetings to share the dengue prevention message with parents and educators.
  - The Ministry of Health is partnering with the Ministry of Education to host a dengue prevention contest for students to promote dengue awareness and the Year of Innovative Learning and Excellence.

The Communicable Disease Unit and the DEH Vector Control Program continue to investigate reported cases of dengue fever and implement vector control measures.

The Ministry of Health’s community dengue prevention 35 message:

- Search and eliminate mosquito breeding sites.
- Self-protect by wearing insect repellent and ensuring a mosquito-free environment.
- Seek early consultation if you show severe signs or symptoms of dengue.

The next report will be released on Tuesday, April 16, 2019.