Dengue 3 Outbreak, Palau, December 2018 – May 2019

Report Date: May 21, 2019

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 May 13 – 19, 2019, there were 7 new cases and 1 old case reported. This brings the total from December 1, 2018 to May 19, 2019 to 187 cases.

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

**Symptom Profile of Cases**

- Fever
- Chills
- Headache
- Body pain
- Joint pain
- Loss of appetite
- Altered taste sensation
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Cough
- Eye pain
- Abdominal pain
- Rash

**Dengue Cases by Gender and Age Group**

- Male
- Female
- Age range = 0 – 88 years
- Mean age = 30 years
- Median age = 26 years
- Male:Female ratio= 118

The majority of cases during this outbreak have been Palauan.

**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 100 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
  - The Ministry of Health partnered with the Ministry of Education and Roll’Em Productions to host a dengue prevention contest for students to promote dengue awareness and the Year of Innovative Learning and Excellence.
    - A total of 30 students from elementary and high schools in Palau participated the contest.
    - Winning videos were submitted by students from Angaur Elementary School (1st place), Ibobang Elementary School (2nd place), Maris Stella Elementary School (3rd place) and Palau High School (1st place).
    - Contest winners will tour the Roll’Em Productions studio and learn more about video production.
    - The Palau Ministry of Health would like to recognize the generous support of donors towards prizes from Dr. Thane Hancock ($100) and the Belau Medical Society ($1000).

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

**Demographics**

- Age range = 0 – 88 years
- Mean age = 30 years
- Median age = 26 years
- Male:Female ratio= 118

The majority of cases during this outbreak have been Palauan.

**Epi Curve**

- No cases
- 1 – 10 cases
- 11 – 20 cases
- More than 20 cases

**Cases by State and Koror Hamlets**

- State
- Koror
- Palau

**Dengue cases in Koror by hamlet**

- 5/1/2019 – 5/19/2019, n= 10

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The next report will be released on Tuesday, May 28, 2019.