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 environmental control measures, and ensuring adequate resources are available to combat the outbreak.

Between July 20 – August 4, 2019, there were 36 new cases and 3 old cases reported. This brings the total from December 1, 2018 to July 28, 2019 to 457 cases. There has been one death attributed to dengue infection during this outbreak.

Response Measures

- The Belau National Hospital (BNH) Laboratory, four major community health centers throughout the island, and laboratories from three private clinics have the capacity to test symptomatic patients for dengue via a rapid diagnostic test kit, SD Bioline Dengue Duo (Dengue NS1 Ag + IgG/IgM) by Abbott.
- The BNH Lab continues to send a sample of serum specimens to the Hawaii State Laboratory (HSL) for confirmation and serotyping for monitoring.
- There have been 117 serotyped cases of DENV-3. The last recorded cases of DENV-2 in Palau were from November of 2018.
- Human specimens from the previous DENV-2 outbreak and the current DENV-3 outbreak were sent to CDC’s Dengue Branch in Puerto Rico for sequencing. Results are still pending.

Report Date: August 6, 2019