Syndromic Surveillance Update
We have completed Epi Week 14 of 2015 and report information through 4/5/2015. The graph below shows 2015 starting with Epi Week number 1.

Reported during the past week:
- Gastroenteritis – 16 cases, down from 20 cases last week and below the threshold for action.
- Acute Fever and Rash – 1 case, up from 0 last week; case diagnosed as heat rash.
- Conjunctivitis (Pink eye) – 1 case, same as last week and below the threshold for action.

We have completed Epi Week 14 of 2015 and report information through 4/5/2015.

Influenza-like Illness (ILI) – 9 cases, down from 20 cases and below the threshold for action.
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Vacancy Announcement

Preparedness Training & Exercise Coordinator

Position: Preparedness Training & Exercise Coordinator

Salary: GI-13/1-5, $629.81-$703.23 b/w

Location: Bureau of Public Health

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

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Source of Fund: Federal

Major Duties: Design and implement an integrated training & exercise program; evaluate exercise and real event response; develop re-training activities and implement corrective actions.

Qualifications:
- Bachelors Degree in Training and Organizational Development or related field with at least two (2) years of work related experience.

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Nurse’s Notes

The Bureau of Nursing has launched a new line of attack on the growing non-communicable disease (NCD) crisis in Palau. In 2011 the WHO reported that Palauan men can expect to live to 67 years of age whilst women can expect to live to 76 years. The male nurses at the Ministry are aiming to put an end to early demise of men from preventable disease and other causes.

On January 22, twenty-two (22) male nurses from both the public health nursing and clinical nursing divisions attended an intensive Men’s Health Workshop at PICRC that was developed and presented by US Navy medic Karlton ‘Doc’ Beethea. Doc is attached to Civic Action Team 133-25 currently based at Camp Karau in Palau.

The workshop covered a wide range of topics specifically relating to men’s health, focusing on how to reduce the incidence of NCDs by lifestyle changes and care of self. Prevention is the key. All male nurses at MoH are frontline providers of men’s health and males in the community, men and boys with any worries, concerns or problems should seek out a male nurse if they want information or advice about their health.

Our male nurses are ready and armed to help fight the battle on NCDs and preventable illness. Men need to make their health a priority and pay attention to what their bodies are telling them, including getting regular check-ups, attending free health screening, getting immunized, get active, and seek help if they are wanting to make changes to their lifestyle.

We have programs to help with tobacco and alcohol control, stress busters, nutrition and exercise modification, and self-management of early stage lifestyle illness. Male nurses care about men’s health.

MOH Bids Farewell to Employees & Volunteers

In March and April 2015, the Ministry of Health bid farewell to two long time employees, Berry Moon Watson and Fumiana Masayos. Berry Moon Watson served with the Ministry in many capacities after being hired on June 8, 1986 and most recently served as the Director of Public Health. Her official retirement date is April 4, 2015. Fumiana Masayos has been employed with the Ministry since March 24, 1991 and retired from the Division of Behavioral Health on March 18, 2015.

Inger Aperitis, from the Office of Health Planning, Research & Development left the Ministry as of March 31, 2015 after two years of service.

Sanjeev Shridahan, funded through Australia’s PACTAM program to work with the Bio Med Department, also left on March 31, 2015.

Last, Ying-ju Yu, known as Vivi, volunteered through Shin Kong Hospital to work with the Ministry’s Medical Referral Program to assist patients receiving care in Taiwan. Vivi also left on March 31, 2015 and will continue to serve Palau from Taiwan, including returning to assist volunteer specialists from Shin Kong Hospital.

The Ministry would like to thank these employees and volunteers for their dedication and service to the people of Palau.

Doctors Conduct Outreach Clinic

Several physicians from the Ministry of Health have been conducting “outreach clinics” in different sites around Palau. The clinics, which primarily focus on non-communicable diseases (NCDs) provide patients with follow ups, especially those diagnosed with diabetes, hypertension and other conditions.

Clinics have recently been conducted in Ngarchelong, Ngaremlengui and Melekeok Community Health Centers (CHCs).

“We are doing such outreach clinics in hope to be able to provide out of hospital follow up for those who are unable to come in (to the hospital) for reasons like lack of transportation…”

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MOH Participates In PHS Awareness Week

The Ministry of Health participated in this year’s Education Awareness Week activities held at Palau High School on March 19. Various MOH departments were showcased to students during the program, including the Laboratory, Division of Oral Health, Bureau of Nursing, Physical Therapy Department, and the Human Resource (HR) Department.

The Division of Oral Health held a quiz activity for the students, while other departments had various displays setup to demonstrate the work that they do and the services they offer to patients.

Free blood pressure and weight screening were offered by the Bureau of Nursing for the students, allowing them to know more about their health status. The Education Awareness Week activity was a great opportunity for the Ministry of Health to showcase the many different careers available at the Belau National Hospital as well as in other bureaus of the Ministry including Public Health and Nursing.

I have had two outreach clinics for this year and for both I felt I had an excellent turnout. It was exciting to see so many of our patients show up for their check ups. It was even more exciting to be able to see some of our patients who especially have missed follow ups or have been missing their appointments for various reasons. If we could also continue to improve the range of services related to NCD clinics and follow ups, in the long run this could probably contribute to a lesser onset of NCD complications because of frequent follow up and better availability of healthcare services to such areas.

What would be your biggest challenge? How would you resolve it?

Well we just started our outreach clinics so like most new projects we are still dealing with minor issues like logistics, availability of investigations (like obtaining labs with timely results on site, cxr, ekg, portable ultrasound, etc), access to patients recent and updated data/records and viewing patients xrays (ie intranet connectivity), etc. We do see this (outreach clinics) to be highly beneficial to our patients in the long run so we are working hard as a team on improving and acquiring access to the previously mentioned. So stay tuned for better and improved NCD clinics!

What would you like to say to our community based on your experiences?

Thank you all for your time and effort especially for coming in for regular check ups at our clinic. We really appreciate concerns and questions from our patients especially regarding their health. This means that they have interest and a good sense of self awareness when it comes to their health, which I also think is an important part of self management for NCDs. I usually remind my patients to take the time and reflect on how we eat and how we live our lives because not only does it affect our health but our families can also learn from us if we show them the healthy way to live.

This could also help improve the patients’ compliance with follow up appointments,” says Dr. Myra Adelbai, one of the At present we are doing what we call “Outreach Clinics” which are really our NCD clinics but at sites outside of Belau National Hospital. Our NCD or Non Communicable Diseases Clinics are where we regularly follow up patients especially those diagnosed with Diabetes, Hypertension and other medical conditions. Our outside sites include Ngarengai Dispensary (which I’m covering), Ngarengi Dispensary (Dr Lala), and Melekeok (Dr Maddison).

Name a significant observation you have had on these outreach visits to outlying states. Something positive.

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank UNICEF for this kind assistance in providing life-saving emergency supplies, building our capacity in emergency preparedness and for being a valuable partner to Palau in promoting children’s health throughout the year,” added Mr. Ngirmang. The supplies include a basic health kit, water purification tablets, oral rehydration salts, Vitamin A capsules, micronutrient powder, collapsible water containers and a health clinic tent. In the event of an emergency, the health kit will enable the Ministry of Health to meet initial health care needs of the affected population should health clinics, along with their stocks, have both been damaged or destroyed. The UNICEF basic health kit contains medicines, medical supplies and basic medical equipment for up to 1,000 patient visits.

Water purification tablets are important in ensuring safe water for children, in order to prevent diseases such as diarrhoea, intestinal worms and typhoid. Vitamin A can boost children’s immune system and increase their resistance to disease, improving their chances for survival, growth and development.

UCSF Professor Makes Donation

Dr. William Byerley M.D., is a professor emeritus, meaning honorable reti or that retains his title of office, for psychiatry and human genetics at Langley Porter Psychiatric Institute, a teaching hospital of the psychiatric department of the University of California- San Francisco. Dr. Byerley specializes in psychiatric disorders such as Attention Deficit Disorder, Bipolar Disorder and Manic Depressive order, depression, and Schizophrenia; and has authored and co-authored over a hundred publications in his 30 year career. He and his group have done studies and investigations of schizophrenia in Palau, Micronesia and Costa Rica. Dr. William Byerley recently made a generous donation of $2500 towards purchasing newer medication for the people and patients of the BNH. We thank you Dr. Byerley for your continued support.

Palau Pre-Positions Emergency Supplies From Unicef For Children

KOROR, 02 April 2015 – Following recent devastating impacts of natural disasters in Palau and throughout the Micronesian region, the Government of Palau with support from UNICEF Pacific is strengthening its preparedness efforts. Today, the government received a shipment of life-saving emergency supplies that will be stored and managed by the Ministry of Health.

UNICEF Pacific Representative, Dr Karen Allen said “Pre-positioning of humanitarian supplies which includes health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene items are necessary to ensure our response after an emergency is reliable, swift and timely. We appreciate the Government of Palau’s commitment and responsibility in requesting these supplies that will be used primarily for Palauans but also, upon request from the Governments of FSM or Marshall Islands, for an emergency situation there.”

Honorable Minister of Health, Mr Gregorio Ngirmang, said “Pre-positioning emergency supplies helps the Ministry of Health be better prepared to provide assistance to the public in the event of the natural disaster. It is an efficient, organized and proactive approach, but more importantly it saves us time and energy, so that we can immediately get help to the people that need it most, our children and their families.”

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank UNICEF for this kind assistance in providing life-saving emergency supplies, building our capacity in emergency preparedness and for being a valuable partner to Palau in promoting children’s health throughout the year,” added Mr. Ngirmang. The supplies include a basic health kit, water purification tablets, oral rehydration salts, Vitamin A capsules, micronutrient powder, collapsible water containers and a health clinic tent. In the event of an emergency, the health kit will enable the Ministry of Health to meet initial health care needs of the affected population should health clinics, along with their stocks, have both been damaged or destroyed. The UNICEF basic health kit contains medicines, medical supplies and basic medical equipment for up to 1,000 patient visits.

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On Feb. 27th 2015 Generous donations of 8 cases of adult diapers (4 cases large & 4 cases medium) from the Hospital Volunteers Inc. Thank you for your donation!