From April 19, 2017 to April 20, 2017 the Ministry of Health (MOH) hosted a Psychological First Aid Workshop at the Assembly Hall of Palau Community College (PCC). The workshop was offered to community volunteers & key partner agencies involved with responding to crisis events such as natural disasters (e. g., typhoons or earthquakes) or distressing situations (e. g., car accidents or a loss of a loved one). Participating agencies included the Palau Red Cross Society (PRCS), the Norwegian People’s Aid, the National Emergency Management Office (NEMO), the Weather Service Bureau, the Bureau of Public Safety under the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), the Ministry of Education (MOE), Emmaus-Bethania High School, State & Cultural Affairs of the Koror State Government (KSG), the Palau Community Action Agency (PCAA), and the Palau National Olympic Committee (PNOC).

Psychological First Aid is defined as a humane, supportive response offered to a fellow human being who is suffering and may need support. It involves providing practical care & support that is not intrusive; assessing a person’s needs & concerns; helping people address basic needs such as food, water, or information about a situation; listening to people without pressuring them to talk; comforting people and helping them feel calm; helping people connect to information, services, or social support; and protecting people from further harm. Any person—not just medical professionals—may offer Psychological First Aid.

The workshop highlighted skills needed in assisting people who have experienced crisis situations. Participants learned how to assess situations, identify people in need of Psychological First Aid, and apply the proper methods of approaching distressed individuals. PFA, continued on PAGE 4
Living With Someone with Depression?

“When you live with someone with depression, you can help them recover, but you need to take care of yourself too.”

What is Depression:
Depression is an illness and not a character weakness.
Depression can be treated. What treatment is best and how long the depression lasts depend on the severity of the depression.
The support of carers, friends and family facilitates recovery from depression. Patience and perseverance is needed, as recovery can take time.
Stress can make depression worse.

What You Can Do for People Who are Depressed:
Make it clear that you want to help, listen without judgement, and offer support.
Find out more about depression.
Encourage them to seek professional help when available. Offer to accompany them to appointments.
If medication is prescribed, help them to take it as prescribed. Be patient; it usually takes a few weeks to feel better.
Help them with everyday tasks and to have regular eating and sleeping patterns.
Encourage regular exercise and social activities. Encourage them to focus on the positive, rather than the negative.
If they are thinking about self-harm, or have already intentionally harmed themselves, do not leave them alone. Seek further help from the emergency services or a healthcare professional. In the meantime, remove items such as medications, sharp objects and firearms.
Take care of yourself too. Try to find ways to relax and continue doing things you enjoy.

“Depression can be treated. If you think you have depression, seek help.”

#LetsTalk
www.who.int/depression/en

MARC Held at the Ministry of Health
In April, the Republic of Palau Ministry of Health (MOH) hosted the Micronesia Anaesthetic Refresher Course (MARC). The course provided the medical workforce of Micronesia, specifically members of the Micronesia Anaesthetic Society, with continuing medical education about the safe delivery of anesthesia.

Lecturers for the workshop were Dr. Arthur Vartis (Convenor and Committee Member of the Overseas Development and Education Committee of the Australian Society of Anaesthetists), Dr. Stuart Lavender (Australian Society of Anaesthetists), Dr. Norifumi Kuratani (Japanese Society of Anaesthesiologists), and Dr. Chihiro Imai (Japanese Society of Anaesthesiologists).

Participants included medical professionals from the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). The course covered topics such as Anaesthetic Crisis Management, Critical Bleeding Airway Protocols, Perioperative Medicine, Obstetric Emergencies, Paediatric Anaesthesia & Ultrasound Guided Vascular Access, and Nerve Blocks.

During the course, the lecturers donated eleven (11) Lifebox Pulse Oximeters to the region of Micronesia. The donation was made courtesy of the Australian Society of Anaesthetists (ASA).

A pulse oximeter is a device that monitors oxygen levels in patients and will give an audible alarm if that level falls below a pre-set value. It is now routinely used in anesthesia. It is well known that relatively short periods without oxygen can be rapidly fatal to a patient. Early detection of a fall in oxygen levels by the pulse oximeter has saved many lives the world over.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes the safe delivery of anesthesia as a key pillar in addressing the global burden of surgical disease. One of its challenges is supporting a skilled workforce with access to continuing medical education. The Micronesia Refresher Anaesthetic Refresher Course aims to address this challenge.

MARC is the only regular medical education course offered in Micronesia regarding a medical specialty. The Australian Society of Anaesthetists has convened the refresher course since 1994.
The public is informed that gastroenteritis cases continue to be seen at the Belau National Hospital. As of April 16, 2017 there have been a total of 130 confirmed cases of Gastroenteritis, affecting 56% males and 45% females. Of these cases, 23% are between the ages of 0 and 5 while 24% are school aged children with ages ranging from 6 to 19. The Bureau of Public Health urges the public to remember to wash your hands with soap and water (or use hand sanitizer) when leaving the bathroom and before you eat. Encourage your kids to wash their hands as often as possible, or provide them with hand sanitizer. Symptoms of Gastroenteritis include vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramping and loss of appetite. It is really important to get enough fluids (including juice, Gatorade, and water) to balance electrolytes. If you suspect you have gastroenteritis, please do not prepare or serve food until you are symptom-free. For more information on Gastroenteritis, please contact the Ministry of Health Communicable Disease Unit at (tel): 488-2450.

**Gastroenteritis Outbreak**

**Heartsaver® Training for the non-medical staff of the Ministry of Health (MOH) was held on Friday, April 21, 2017. The training covered the basics of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) for adults and children. Participants learned how to properly perform high-quality CPR, give effective breaths using mouth-to-mouth, describe how to help a choking adult or child, and explain the concepts that will improve chances of survival in an individual. Instructors for the training were Nurse Jocelyne L. Tonyokwe and Nurse Amos Solomon.**

**Do You Feel like Life is Not Worth Living?**

“*If you feel like life is not worth living, reach out for help. You are not alone. Help is available.*”

**What You Might Be Feeling or Thinking:**

- The pain seems overwhelming and unbearable.
- You feel hopeless, like there is no point in living.
- You are consumed by negative and disturbing thoughts.
- You cannot imagine any solution to your problems other than suicide.
- You imagine death as a relief.
- You think everyone would be better off without you.
- You feel worthless.
- You feel very lonely even when you have friends and family.
- You do not understand why you are feeling or thinking this way.

**What You Can Do:**

- Talk to a trusted family member, friend, or colleague about how you feel.
- If you think you are in immediate danger of harming yourself, contact the emergency services or a crisis line, or go there directly.
- Talk to a professional, such as a doctor, mental health professional, counsellor or social worker.
- If you practice a religion, talk to someone from your religious community who you trust.
- Join a self-help or support group for people with lived experience of self-harm. You can help each other to feel better.

#LetsTalk

www.who.int/depression/en

**BMS Donates Chairs to Hospital**

On Thursday, April 13, 2017 the Belau Medical Society (BMS) donated Six (6) Executive Chairs to the Radiology Department of the Belau National Hospital. The donation was presented by BMS President Dr. Sylvia Wally, BMS Secretary/Treasurer Dr. Glenda Santos, and BMS Member Dr. Robert Maddison. Palau Minister of Health Dr. Emais Roberts, on behalf of the Ministry of Health & Belau National Hospital Staff, would like to thank the Belau Medical Society for its generous donation.

The Belau Medical Society is a non-profit organization comprised entirely of current & retired doctors, dentists, physician assistants, and other allied medical professionals in Palau. Its vision is to improve the profession of medicine within the community. BMS is also an affiliate member of the Pacific Basin Medical Association (PBMS).
**PFA, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

Simulations of crisis events allowed the participants to practice applying Psychological First Aid. The workshop also identified the three (3) action principles of Psychological First Aid: Look (Momoes), Listen (Morrenes), and Link (Molngeseu).

The Psychological First Aid Workshop was made possible through the collaborative efforts of the MOH Emergency Health Program and the MOH Division of Behavioral Health. Facilitator for the workshop was Consultant Psychiatrist Dr. Jasmine Vergara. It was organized by Preparedness Training & Exercise Coordinator DiJune E. Ngiraswei.

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**Anti-Depressants available at the Ministry of Health Formulary**

Taking your medicine as prescribed (medication adherence) is important for controlling chronic conditions, treating temporary conditions, and overall long-term health & well-being. A personal connection with your doctor or pharmacist is an important part of medication adherence. Because your pharmacist is an expert in medications, they can help suggest how best to take your medications. However, you play the most important part by taking all of your medications as directed.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table Title</th>
<th>Medication Details</th>
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| **SSRIs – Sertraline, Fluoxetine, Escitalopram** | Activating Drugs and best given/taken in the morning.  
**COMMON SIDE EFFECTS** Nausea, Diarrhea, Agitation, Insomnia, Drowsiness, Dry Mouth, Headache, Sweating, Weight Gain or Loss, and Sexual Dysfunction  
**WARNINGS** DO NOT USE other herbal or over-the-counter medicines until you discuss it with your doctor or pharmacist. DONOT SUDDELY STOP YOUR MEDICATION/MEDICINES unless told to do so by your doctor. |
| **Tricyclics – Amitriptyline, Imipramine** | Sedating Drugs that can make you drowsy. DO NOT drive or operate heavy machinery until your body adjust/get used to the medication.  
**COMMON SIDE EFFECTS** Blurred Vision, Drowsiness, Dry Mouth, Weight Gain, Constipation, and Hypotension  
**WARNINGS** DO NOT TAKE with alcohol. These drugs will increase the effect of alcohol. VERY POTENT DRUG Be careful with dose & frequency to avoid overdosage. |
| **Others – Bupropion (also for Nicotine Dependence)** | Swallow tablet whole, DO NOT CRUSH.  
**COMMON SIDE EFFECTS** Sleep Disturbance, Dizziness, Insomnia, Tremor Headache, Nausea, Dry Mouth, Constipation  
**WARNINGS** DO NOT TAKE MEDICATION WITH ALCOHOL or it will increase risk of unpleasant side effects. DO NOT DRIVE OR OPERATE HEAVY MACHINERY until your body adjusts or gets used to the effects of the drug. |

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**TIPS FOR TAKING MEDICATION**

1. Take your medication at the same time every day.
2. Try taking your medications with a daily routine, like brushing your teeth or getting ready for bed. Before choosing mealtime for your routine, check if your medication should be taken on a full or empty stomach.
3. Keep a “Medicine Calendar” with your pill bottles and note each time you take a dose.
4. Use a pill container. Some types have sections for multiple doses at different times such as morning, lunch, evening, and night.
5. When using a pill container, refill it at the same time each week. For example, every Sunday morning after breakfast.
6. When travelling, be certain to bring enough of your medication, plus a few days extra, in case your return is delayed.
7. If you’re flying, keep your medication in your carry-on bag to avoid lost luggage. Temperatures inside the cargo hold could damage your medication.