



*Republic of Palau*

## **Ministry of Health and Human Services**

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### **MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

#### **DIRECTIVE NO. 66-22**

#### **AUTHORIZING ISOLATION, QUARANTINE, AND RESTRICTED ENTRY MEASURES TO PREVENT AND MITIGATE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)**

**WHEREAS**, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a severe acute respiratory illness that was first identified in December 2019, and that occurs through human-to-human respiratory transmission; and

**WHEREAS**, COVID-19 presents a major threat to public health in the Republic, and is particularly dangerous for those who are immunocompromised or have underlying medical conditions; and

**WHEREAS**, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on February 11, 2020, and further characterized it as a Pandemic on March 12, 2020. The WHO and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that all countries and territories implement aggressive measures to prevent and control the transmission of COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, as of April 2022, over 99% of Palau's population has been vaccinated against COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, the Ministry of Health and Human Services (MHHS) has established COVID-19 protocols for case prevention, identification, and management, and numerous businesses are now certified through the Pandemic Safety Certification Program for establishing COVID-safe practices such as mask wearing, social distancing, regular disinfecting, and hand hygiene; and

**WHEREAS**, the Republic coordinates closely with the WHO, CDC, and Pacific Islands Health Officers Association (PIHOA) on public health guidance, best practices and suggested guidelines for mitigation of COVID-19;

**WHEREAS** it is necessary and appropriate to take action to ensure that COVID-19 remains controlled and that the residents at risk and the vulnerable population of Palau remain safe and secure.

**NOW THEREFORE**, by virtue of the authority vested in me as the Director of Public Health of the Ministry of Health and Human Services, I hereby authorize revised requirements for International Entry and as required for Isolation and Quarantine pursuant to 34 PNC § 102(m) and 34 PNC § 701 and the MHHS Rules & Regulations for Isolation and Quarantine of Contagious Diseases to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the Republic of Palau, as follows:

## **Section 1. Vaccine and Testing Requirements Applicable to International Travel into the Republic:**

- COVID Safe Practices. All Travelers are advised to practice social distancing, wear a mask over the nose and mouth when within six feet of others, and avoid large indoor gatherings for fourteen (14) days prior to their travel to the Republic.
- Unvaccinated Individuals Under 18 years of age. Unvaccinated individuals under 18 years of age are permitted to travel to the Republic and must adhere to all other requirements of this section.
- Children Under 2 years of age. Children under 2 years of age are exempt from the requirement to be COVID-19 tested prior to travel into the Republic.

### **A. Transit and Entry Protocols:**

- Steps for Entry:

1. Vaccination. Travelers must be fully vaccinated to enter the Republic. Travelers must submit proof of complete COVID-19 vaccination with final dose administered at least fourteen (14) days prior to departure to the Republic. Vaccine received must be authorized for emergency use or approved by either the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or the World Health Organization (WHO), or the Medigen vaccine authorized by the Republic of China – Taiwan’s health authorities.

\*For commercial air travel, travelers must submit proof to the airline. For chartered vessels, travelers must submit directly to MHHS.

2. Negative COVID-19 PCR Test or Documentation of Recovery. All Travelers must also provide proof of either:

- a. A negative result of a COVID-19 PCR test (any type of PCR test, including NAAT, RT-PCR, qPCR, RT-LAMP, TMA, molecular test, isothermal amplification, ddPCR, or CRISPR), test must be conducted with Nasopharyngeal (NP), Oropharyngeal (OP), Mid-turbinate, Nasal, or Anterior Nasal samples, and such test must be taken within three (3) days prior to departure from the point of origin to the Republic. Sputum and saliva specimen are not accepted. Self-administered and home kit tests (even if the sample was taken under the supervision of a healthcare provider) are not accepted; or
- b. A negative result of a COVID-19 antigen test (WHO or US FDA authorized or approved test), and such test must be taken within one (1) day prior to departure from the point of origin to the Republic; or
- c. Documentation of recovery from COVID-19 which includes proof of a recent positive viral test and a letter from a healthcare provider or a public health official stating that traveler has recovered from COVID-19 and is cleared to travel. Travelers shall not enter the Republic until completion of a full ten (10) days of isolation after symptoms started or the date a positive test was taken if no symptoms.

\*For commercial air travel, travelers must submit proof to the airline. For chartered vessels, travelers must submit directly to MHHS.

3. Mitigation Orders After Arrival. All Travelers are required to follow all requirements stated in the Mitigation Orders issued upon arrival.

**Section 2. Guidelines for Vessel Crew:**

- The crew of any aircraft or vessel entering the Republic must provide negative COVID-19 PCR (any type of PCR test, including NAAT, RT-PCR, qPCR, RT-LAMP, TMA, molecular test, isothermal amplification, ddPCR, or CRISPR) within three (3) days prior to departure from point of origin or a negative result of a COVID-19 antigen test (WHO or US FDA authorized or approved test) taken within one (1) day prior to departure from point of origin to the Republic and proof of full vaccination; provide official documentation on infection control measures implemented for aircraft or vessel operations and health management protocols for personnel;
- Any crew member of any air or water vessel that disembarks into the Republic of Palau shall be subject to these regulations, except in cases wherein an air or water vessel breaks down unexpectedly within the territory of the Republic. In such cases where any crew member disembarking such vessel does not fulfill specified entry requirements, they shall then undergo other mitigation measures as deemed necessary by MHHS.

**Section 3. Isolation.** The isolation of persons infected by COVID-19 is hereby authorized as follows:

- Any person proven or strongly suspected to be infected with COVID-19 shall be isolated for a period as deemed necessary by MHHS at either at an isolation facility or at home at the discretion of the Director of Public Health; and
- Infection may be proven or strongly suspected based on a presumptive test result, and/or a confirmatory test result by means of authorized assays for viral testing including those that detect SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid or antigen.
- Isolation Facilities: The isolation rooms of Belau National Hospital shall be reserved for infected persons in need of critical care. MHHS shall identify other appropriate and adequate facilities, either public or private property to be designated as Isolation Facilities for COVID-19 infected persons as necessary.

**Section 4. Quarantine.** The quarantine of persons exposed to COVID-19 is hereby authorized as follows:

- Any person determined to have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 shall self-quarantine/self-monitor for a period of 10 days (10) and follow applicable guidelines as deemed necessary by the Ministry of Health and Human Services.
- If any quarantined person is found to be infected, that person shall be promptly relocated to an appropriate isolation facility, which may include the individual's home if determined appropriate by the Director of Public Health.

**Section 5. Applicability to all Travel into the Republic.**

- This Directive is intended for all travelers entering the Republic, including those entering the Republic via commercial or private vessel. Private and charter vessel travelers must submit proof of vaccination at least 96 hours before departure from point of origin and test results within 24 hours of departure from point of origin to MHHS for verification.

**Section 6. Delegation of Authority.**

- Pursuant to 34 PNC § 101 and Section 4.10 of the MHHS Rules & Regulations for Isolation and Quarantine of Contagious Diseases, Authority to order the isolation or quarantine of persons found to be infected or exposed within the Republic of Palau or upon arrival into the Republic either by sea or at the Palau International Airport, is hereby delegated to the Director of the Bureau of Public Health and Human Services.

**Section 7. Exemptions.**

- No exemptions to the isolation or quarantine requirements or restricted entry measures of this directive may be made, except by the Director of Public Health and Human Services and in writing. The Director may issue exemptions on an individual, case-by-case basis, based only on an articulable medical justification.

**Section 8. Term.**

- This directive supersedes and replaces MHHS Directive No.07-22, which was issued on January 16, 2022. Unless cancelled, revoked, or re-issued, this directive shall remain in effect from the date of issuance until further notice.

Issued this 30 May 2022 at the Ministry of Health and Human Services in Koror, Republic of Palau.



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Sherilynn Madraisau  
Director, Bureau of Public Health and Human Services  
Ministry of Health and Human Services

