

FSM Information Services

Press Release

The FSM COVID-19 Response Framework: A Summary

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On April 6th, 2020, the FSM COVID-19 Task Force disseminated and opened for comment the FSM COVID-19 Response Framework, the Nation’s contingency plan for the arrival of the COVID-19 coronavirus. His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), has been briefed on the Response Framework by the FSM COVID-19 Task Force and has endorsed it for transmittal to the 21st FSM Congress and the State Governments of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae. Although the primary intended audience for this living (i.e. continuously updated) document are the Nation’s healthcare professionals, this release intends to broadly review the plan’s objectives and how it measures success, as well as some of the requests for financial support to the Nation’s friends, allies, and development partners to augment the FSM’s health sector capacity. Citizens interested in reviewing the FSM COVID-19 Response Framework themselves may find it here: https://gov.fm/files/FSM_COVID-19_Response_Framework.pdf

As a “Whole of Government” response, the FSM COVID-19 Response Framework intends to guide the FSM in mitigating the impact from COVID-19 by providing a standardized framework for the National and State Governments in their collective and coordinated response to the Pandemic, including outlining the strategies necessary to manage a flexible, scalable, and proportionate health system response, with appropriate and timely interventions. The Framework operates on the assumptions that everyone is susceptible to COVID-19 infection, that those with co-morbidities (e.g. diabetes) may have more severe outcomes following infection, that no treatments or vaccines are currently available, and that social distancing measures are effective in slowing the virus’ transmission.

The Framework presently includes a twenty-million-dollar (\$20,000,000) budget, the overwhelming majority of which is based in the States of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae for the purpose of healthcare infrastructure and equipment, supplies and medications, and training. The FSM National Government’s Executive Branch is actively collaborating with the 21st FSM Congress and the Nation’s friends, allies, and development partners, such as the United States of America, the People’s Republic of China, Japan, Australia, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and more, to bring in the necessary financial support.

As of April 8th, 2020, the FSM remains free of any confirmed cases of COVID-19; by extension, the current mission goals are to prevent, and delay, the introduction of the coronavirus, and prepare for its eventual introduction into the Nation.

In the event of 1-10 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the FSM, the mission goals evolve to identifying mitigating local transmission, and preventing and delaying additional introduction of the virus into the Nation.

In the event of 10-100 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the FSM, the mission goals change to maximizing the use of limited resources, slowing transmission in the community, caring for COVID-19 affected patients, preventing infections from occurring in healthcare settings, maintaining services for other urgent health conditions, and preventing the spread of the virus to neighboring States and outer or neighboring islands.

In the event of 100 or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the FSM, the mission goals shift to focusing on the management of severe cases, reprioritizing resources away from quarantine activities, mandating social distancing, and continuing to prevent the spread of the virus to other States and islands within the Nation.

Due to the Nation's relatively extreme proportion of at-risk citizens, a significant component of the Framework is the COVID-19 Vulnerable Population Mitigation Plan. The stated goal in the Framework is to protect the health of high-risk individuals, with its subsequent first objective being to reduce the exposure of individuals with non-communicable diseases (NCDs), the elderly, the mentally ill, and persons with disabilities. Beyond decentralizing clinical services, establishing remote consultation options, and provisioning 2-3 months of maintenance medications, which are ongoing activities, in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case the Government will seek to develop and mobilize partnerships with private sector entities and volunteer groups to serve as delivery mechanisms for NCD services.

The second objective is to reduce the vulnerability of individuals with NCDs or co-morbidities. This largely includes lifestyle advice and education on basic personal protection, including the oft-repeated requests from the Government that all citizens frequently wash their hands, avoid large gatherings, keep at least 2 meters (or approximately 6 feet), and avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth.

The third objective is to identify and resolve the challenges encountered in implementing the mitigation plan. This includes constant monitoring and evaluation of all COVID-19 related activities.

The FSM National Government will continue to closely collaborate with the Nation's States, including relevant updates to the FSM COVID-19 Response Framework as said updates become necessary.



Pictured Above: Cabinet Members of the FSM & Pohnpei State Governments watch as President Panuelo & Governor Oliver shake hands, affirming the close working relationship between the National & State Governments