



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
GOVERNOR'S COVID-19 TASK FORCE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 5, 2021

Governor Torres announces temporary restrictions to safeguard the CNMI

Citing an increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations, Governor Ralph DLG. Torres, the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC), announced that the CNMI COVID-19 Emergency Directives have been amended to implement new guidelines on in-person interactions, public gatherings, and vaccine verification to protect the health and safety of the people of the CNMI.

Since the beginning of 2020, the Torres administration through the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and the CHCC has implemented strict but necessary constraints on activities throughout the Commonwealth to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 throughout our community.

Under the leadership of Governor Torres, the CNMI will shift its focus towards protection against increased hospitalization that would overwhelm CHCC and private clinics and to ultimately safeguard vulnerable residents with preexisting conditions and health ailments.

As we have seen during the early days of the pandemic, public health measures such as wearing masks, watching your distance, washing your hands, and getting vaccinated reduce the spread of the disease and prevent vulnerable members of our community from serious illness. While the CNMI remains safe due to its high vaccination rate, the Task Force remains vigilant of the rise of confirmed positive cases within the community and the potential threat of the Omicron variant.

Data continue to show that unvaccinated individuals are more likely to be hospitalized with severe symptoms compared to vaccinated individuals.

"It is vitally important that our people continue to remain vigilant and take personal responsibility to protect ourselves, our families, our friends, our man'amko, and our loved ones with preexisting illnesses. We must continue to encourage the unvaccinated to get vaccinated. Our focus is now on protecting against mass hospitalization by decreasing the risk of community transmission through these guidelines," **said Governor Torres.**

The following restrictions will become effective on **Monday, December 6, 2021 through Sunday, December 19, 2021.**

GOVERNMENT

Governor Torres has closed all non-essential government offices.

All non-essential government employees of the Commonwealth's departments and agencies are advised to stay home for the next 14 days.

To ensure the continuity of public services, all department and activity heads have been advised to facilitate teleworking and timekeeping within their offices, divisions, and agencies during this government stay-at-home order.

Certain essential government offices will be open to the public on a limited basis. This includes the Division of Revenue and Taxation and the CNMI Treasury. Essential services involved in law enforcement, public safety, and public health will continue to fully operate. Announcements will be made regarding other public services.

MASK-WEARING INDOORS

Face masks are required in all public indoor spaces. These spaces include but are not limited to: common areas of apartment buildings and offices, gyms, shops, cultural facilities, restaurants, bars and night clubs.

Face masks are not required while seated at a food service establishment or actively eating or drinking.

Signage is required to be placed at all entrances indicating that face masks are required inside your facility.

CURFEW

Curfew Hours are now **12:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m.**

Exceptions to curfew hours remain:

- First responders while in performance of their official duties and displaying a COVID-19 Task Force-issued badge
- Any person lawfully employed during the Curfew Hours or is in direct route of going to or returning from their place of employment
- Any person going to or returning from admission to the CHCC hospital or completion of treatment such as hemodialysis.

SOCIAL GATHERINGS

All indoor events must limit attendance to 50% of allowed occupancy, unless vaccination verification or negative test verification is done by the event organizer or establishment owner, in which case 100% occupancy is allowable. A facility's occupancy is set by the Department of Public Works (DPW) Building Code.

The requirement for verification of a COVID-19 vaccination completion is applicable to any guests 12 years and older. A proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours will be the option for the unvaccinated. COVID-19 tests are free when done at a Community Based Testing site.

Additionally, gathering organizers and establishments must have the means to conduct temperature screening of all employees, patrons, and attendees prior to entering the establishment or participating in the event. Establishments or organizers must document each patron's and attendee's name, phone number, and evidence of verification of completed COVID-19 vaccination or test (which may be documented by recording the date of last vaccination or test) in a log which must be accessible to CNMI officials.

VACCINE VERIFICATION

Acceptable proof of vaccination includes an original vaccination card, a photocopy or photograph of a vaccination card, or an immunization record or documentation provided by CHCC or a healthcare provider.

A completed vaccination must meet the following:

- 2 weeks (14 days) after one dose of an accepted single-dose vaccine (J&J vaccines)
- 2 weeks (14 days) after second dose of an accepted 2-dose series (Moderna or Pfizer)

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC continue to urge individuals to practice the Three W's: ***Wash your hands. Watch your distance. Wear a face covering.***

The COVID-19 Infoline has a new number and operating hours. For comments, concerns, and inquiries regarding protocols, call (670) 488-0211.

The COVID-19 Infoline hotline runs 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., Monday to Sunday.

The CNMI is reminded to watch out for misinformation and to follow updates directly from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and the CHCC. The spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself.

If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, contact the CHCC Tele-Triage hotline at (670) 233-2067. The CHCC Tele-Triage hotline runs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Updates from the COVID-19 Task Force and the CHCC can be found on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts @governorcnmi and @cnmichcc, as well as through CNMI media partners.

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