

Papua New Guinea Announces 17th Positive Case

Sunday 19th July 2020

Papua New Guinea's 17th Case of COVID-19 is the 6th positive case identified in the last 5 days, all detected in Port Moresby. This case provides further evidence of community transmission in the Capital City.

This case was identified during Port Moresby General Hospital's routine swabbing of deaths of patients with respiratory symptoms.

Case 17 was a 48-year-old female from Central Province, who passed away after a battle with Stage 4 breast cancer. The Primary cause of death was multiple organ failure, which is reported to have spread through her lungs, liver and throughout her body. Her illness and death may have been complicated by COVID-19.

"Throughout the world we have seen COVID-19 attack patients that have had underlying medical conditions and while we cannot say this patient died of COVID-19, it speaks to the science that is out there in the world and what we have been saying. COVID-19 doesn't discriminate, it can attack the strongest or in this case the most vulnerable. It can even attack some of the smartest – as is the case of doctors and health care workers around the world. We must all change the way we live, things will never be how they were before". Dr Paison Dakulala

Meanwhile, the surveillance team at the National Control Centre have completed interviews of Cases 12 to 16 who are all stable and currently in Isolation.

Incident Manager Dr Daoni Esorom when visiting retail outlets and other public areas encouraged managers in the city to scale up their efforts in keeping their patrons safe. Supermarkets, churches and public facilities were

visited during routine checks to assist them initiate Infection Prevention Control measures.

He also encouraged all citizens to embrace the “Niupela Pasin” and to wear masks where Physical Distancing is difficult to be maintained. Public Health Measures as part of the Niupela Pasin will be scaled up this week and a meeting has been scheduled with the City Manager tomorrow to discuss enforcement.

The Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS Hon. Jelta Wong also added, “Firstly, my condolences go out to the family of this lady. Almost every Papua New Guinean has lost a family member to cancer, and it is devastating to see that COVID-19 infiltrated her system when it was at its weakest.

But Ladies and Gentlemen – COVID-19 is real and it is moving around our communities because we are simply being too complacent. The danger is that our people will think COVID-19 exists at the Port Moresby General Hospital and if we stay away from there we will be ok. But that couldn’t be further from the truth.



These last 6 positive cases were moving in and out of communities, attending church services, going to shopping centers, congregating at buai markets and using public transport. They could have been infected anywhere and God willing our contact tracing will discover that they haven’t infected others, but people aren’t listening.

I also urge my colleagues in Parliament to be responsible with the messages you are sending to the General Public. You are leaders. When you spread doubt amongst our people you weaken their resolve. We cannot afford to have our people drop their guards on COVID-19.

Our doctors and our scientists, our health workers, our military intelligence – are working around the clock to keep us safe. Support their efforts, show them that their efforts are not in vain. You can campaign in 2022”.

Our children in their schools, and our people at work or in the community are experiencing change. I am happy to see wash basins, temperature checks and wearing of masks in Public – but what are we doing when we go back home? Are we letting ourselves down?

Let's not be complacent. Let's be vigilant and let's mitigate the risk. Remember the virus doesn't move unless people move it. Transmission will only stop if we make the choice to stop it".



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Hon. Jelta Wong, MP

Minister for Health & HIV/AIDS

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