

THEME: "TAKING ACTIONS TODAY FOR MICRONESIA'S PROSPERITY TOMORROW"

Resolution 23-01

Investment and Expansion of Innovative Technologies for Healthcare Service Applications and Enhanced Delivery

WHEREAS, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) was officially declared a global pandemic on March 11, 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO); and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Pacific island jurisdictions were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic with approximately 117,828 cumulative confirmed cases and approximately 577 deaths from March 2020 to February 2023; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Pacific island jurisdictions took decisive early actions and interventions to partially or fully close their borders to minimize, control, and prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 within their respective borders, including set-up of strict border monitoring and screening protocols, early adoption of evidence-based prevention and control measures such as mask, handwashing, and social distancing mandates, bans or limitations on aggregate settings including school and other non-essential service closures when required, and roll-out of COVID-19 vaccinations; and

WHEREAS, these early actions and interventions effectively minimized the potentially devastating impacts of COVID-19 as seen elsewhere in the world, but came at a great cost to already fragile island economies and to individuals and families forcibly separated by rapid-decision border closures and subsequent extended repatriation efforts; and

WHEREAS, the rapid-decision early actions to partially and/or fully close borders were enacted to delay the introduction of COVID-19 in full recognition of the fact that the U.S. Pacific Island jurisdictions had existing critical weaknesses and gaps in their respective healthcare infrastructures, systems, and workforce capacities to effectively address COVID-19 at the start of the pandemic, and that these border closures would provide the needed time to mobilize the critical resources to modify/build new infrastructure, recruit and train staff, procure materials, supplies, and equipment, vaccinate vulnerable populations, etc.; and

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WHEREAS, critical successes have been achieved to protect the health and well-being of vulnerable Pacific Islander communities throughout the pandemic demonstrated by some of the highest COVID-19 vaccination rates globally attained in the U.S. Pacific Island jurisdictions, and less than 1% Case Fatality Ratios (CFRs) across all sites; and

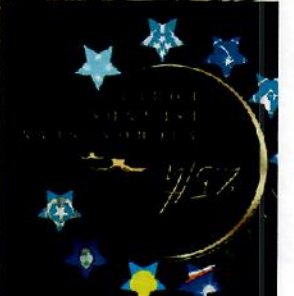
WHEREAS, almost exactly two years since the pandemic was declared, COVID-19 continues to circulate across all the U.S. Pacific Island jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, the Pacific Island health departments/ministries have conducted (and/or are in the process of conducting) extensive COVID-19 preparedness and response after-action reviews (AARs), and in doing so have identified lessons learned and discussed critical and priority future action steps to strengthen, update, and expand existing healthcare infrastructure, services, systems, and workforce capacities to enable more timely detection and effective response to any and all new and emerging threats impacting the public's health; and

WHEREAS, the MIF endorsed Resolution 23-04 – Concerning Building Regional and Jurisdiction Level Capacity for and Expansion of Telehealth and Telemedicine in the USAPs as a Matter of Priority to Enhance Health Agency Capabilities and Capacities to Deliver Effective Clinical and Public Health Services at its meeting in Saipan, CNMI in April, 2018,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that there is an urgent and critical need for MIF executive leadership to consult with and support the health departments/ministries to mobilize adequate financial and other resources required to modernize and expand telehealth and telemedicine services and capabilities, including new and innovative telehealth/telemedicine technology applications in critical specialty areas such as teleradiology, telesurgery, telepathology, etc.; and

BE IT RESOLVED, that there is an urgent and critical need for MIF executive leadership to consult with and support the health departments/ministries to mobilize adequate financial and other resources required to modernize and expand the current health sector IT infrastructure that also includes: 1) the development, enactment, institutionalization, and enforcement of associated IT governance and cybersecurity laws and regulations; and 2) identifying and implementing strategies to make more affordable for health departments/ministries adequate broadband access; and



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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that there is an urgent and critical need for MIF executive leadership to consult with and support the health departments/ministries to mobilize adequate financial and other resources required to: 1) modernize and expand health sector health information management systems that include, but are not limited to, electronic health records (EHRs), disease registries, lab information systems, disease surveillance and early warning systems; integrate new and innovative technology applications and modalities across all healthcare settings and services that are scalable, user-friendly, less reliant on physical IT infrastructure, and affordable with the aim to improve timeliness and efficiencies in service delivery; and 3) development, utilization, and integration of healthcare apps across all healthcare services and settings to improve information dissemination and community reach; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the MIF leadership take note of the urgent and critical needs put forward in this resolution, and further commit to consulting with and supporting RHC members to mobilize the relevant financial and other resources required to achieve these urgent actions in a timely and sustainable manner; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the MIF leadership tasks its Secretariat to disseminate this resolution to the relevant MIF regional committees, government agencies, and partners that have the technical knowledge, financial, and other resources required to support health departments/ministries to plan and implement these critically needed actions and interventions, including facilitating intersectoral engagements and collaboration with non-health sector partners and stakeholders, both domestically and regionally, to seek a more holistic and integrated approach to improving access to and quality of health services across the islands.



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