

FSM Information Services

Press Release

21st FSM Congress Extends Public Health Emergency Declaration to July 31st, 2020; For Most Citizens & Residents, Status Quo Remains in Effect Albeit With Additional Implementation of Physical Distancing Measures

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On May 30th, 2020, the 21st Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) adopted Congressional Resolution 21-149, which extended His Excellency David W. Panuelo's Public Health Emergency Declaration to July 31st, 2020. While for most citizens and residents the most substantive change is implementation of the social distancing standards and measures developed by the FSM National and State Governments, the Resolution also calls for the development of a repatriation plan of FSM citizens, students, residents, and members of the Diplomatic Corps once quarantine and isolation facilities meet "acceptable standards."

Whereas Congressional Resolution 21-138 advised that rare exceptions for travel to the FSM may include capacity-building personnel and medical referral patients, Resolution 21-149 expands this potential list to include human remains and the medical and family attendants thereof, as well as Government officials whose duties are "vital and indispensable." While screening and quarantine procedures would remain in effect, and said travel might only be allowable given the sound advice of the FSM National Task Force and the relevant State Task Force, the Resolution allows the potential repatriation of some categories of individuals under some specific circumstances.

The Government is aware that the Nation's citizens stranded abroad are keen to return. The Resolution calls for the National and State Task Forces to cooperate in developing a plan for the repatriation of citizens, students, residents, and members of the Diplomatic Corps once quarantine and isolation facilities meet "acceptable standards." When this plan is developed and implemented, the Panuelo-George administration is likely to require any potential repatriating citizen or resident to submit to a COVID-19 test prior to arrival in the Nation, followed by another test during and at the conclusion of their mandatory quarantine period upon arrival.

President Panuelo, who has been meeting with the Nation's Governors on a weekly basis through video-conferencing, will continue to discuss repatriation of the FSM's stranded citizens with an aim to bring those stranded home in the safest possible manner.

Congressional Resolution 21-149 can be read in full here: https://gov.fm/files/CR_21-149_Engrossed.pdf