

UK emergency medical team on COVID-19 response ready for provincial deployment in Solomon Islands

Seven members of the UK Emergency Medical Team currently in Solomon Islands have been discharged from quarantine this week and are ready for provincial deployment as of today 23 March 2022. Three other members are still in quarantine and will join the team once cleared later in the week.

The team comprised foreign critical care doctors and nurses, epidemiologists and risk communication experts who will be supporting COVID-19 response at the provincial level and more importantly with their wealth of knowledge and experience in COVID-19 response and other health pandemics, build capacity of local health workers.

Tuesday this week, the team was greeted in person by the Health Permanent Secretary Mrs. Pauline McNeil and officials from the Solomon Islands Ministry of Health including the National Referral Hospital (NRH) Senior Management Team.

At the brief meeting, Mrs. McNeil highlighted that one of the main focus of health at the moment is to support COVID-19 response at the provincial level.

She said:

The virus is transmitting in our rural communities in the provinces. These areas continue to report increasing number of COVID cases and in recent weeks, COVID-19 related deaths are reportedly from our rural areas. As such much of our efforts and resources have been geared towards further enhancing the capability and capacity of health facilities and our workers serving rural communities.

Therefore, it is indeed a pleasure to have you all in country to support in this regard and sincere thank you for accepting the request for deployment to this part of the world. Your wealth of knowledge and experience in COVID-19 response and other health pandemics will greatly benefit our provincial and rural health workers but also in the long run, enable us to better respond to public health emergencies.

She thanked the British High Commissioner and High Commission team for swiftly mobilizing and deploying the team and acknowledged the ongoing commitment and support of the UK Government at this difficult time of COVID-19 community transmission.

His Excellency Thomas Coward, British High Commissioner to Solomon Islands

and Nauru in his brief remarks highlighted that the UK Government is very pleased to support current efforts against COVID-19 community transmission in Solomon Islands.

He said:

It is indeed a pleasure to get the team over in just only two weeks after holding initial discussions with the health officials and very exciting to see them out of quarantine and ready for deployment. We remain committed towards the partnership and friendship between our countries and the support provided is only but one example of this commitment.

He assures, the UK Government will continue to work with the Solomon Islands government and the Ministry of Health and where possible, continue to provide support with the current COVID-19 response.

The team leaves for Malaita today (23 March 2022) where they will operate out from Kilu'ufi Hospital to support other Area Health Centres, Rural Health Clinics and Nurse Aid Posts.

After Malaita, the team will be deployed to Western Province and should there be any urgent need that arise from other provinces, the team will be on standby to support.