

## UK EMT gets key health facilities in Solomon Islands COVID-ready

This was made possible through the UK Government's deployment of its Emergency Medical Team (EMT) who were in the country over the last nine weeks. The UK Government-funded deployment includes experts in emergency medicine, critical care and risk communications and is managed by the British NGO UK Med.

The nine weeks have been busy for the UK EMT 10-member team as they have been supporting Kilu'ufi, Atoifi, Gizo, Taro and Sasamunga hospitals in getting them prepared for potential subsequent waves of COVID-19.

During their deployment, assessments have been conducted at these hospitals to review their capacity and identify areas where they can strengthen the overall capacity of local health facilities and national medical staff.

Following the assessments, the team conducted a Training of Trainers course on different ways to manage patients with COVID-19 for key health workers at the health facilities, helping to ensure a long-term impact of the team's work.

A multi-disciplinary approach was used in conducting the training, where doctors, nurses, and other health staff were all teamed together for their training sessions. This has been important for integrating patient experiences and also can improve teamwork at the facilities.

The training sessions at Kilu'ufi including on-the-job mentoring took two weeks with an extended stay by three members of the team who have helped set-up a first of its kind High Dependency Unit (HDU) for the hospital last week.

At Gizo hospital, Western province, similar training session was conducted in the morning and afternoon for a week.

The training sessions conducted were: Respiratory Therapy 2 – included responding to deteriorating patients and recognising acute respiratory distress syndrome and acute hypoxemic respiratory failure.

Another, Respiratory therapy 2 – included initiation escalation and weaning of oxygen therapy with skills session was also conducted along with COVID-19 therapeutics and clinical care (case management), COVID-19 special situations in pregnancy and children.

Other training sessions also included COVID-19 IPC-passing points (infection prevention and control), 'donning and doffing' and hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene with skills sessions, triage (sorting of patients based on symptoms) and the role of physiotherapy in COVID-19. These sessions have been critical in protecting both staff and patients.

The team trained a total of 122 frontline health workers to support their

response to COVID-19. After identifying a lack of access of information, or in some places disinformation, on COVID-19 prevention and vaccination, they also met with 58 community leaders as part of their community outreach to help make reliable and accessible information more readily available.

Three members of the team, who are now back in the UK, stayed as part of an extended deployment at Kilu'ufi hospital, Malaita province, over the past two weeks.