

UK medics provide training to frontline workers in Malaita Province

The UK Emergency Medical Team who travelled to the province on 24 March was deployed to work alongside the Solomon Islands Ministry of Health and Medical Services and the World Health Organization to strengthen the country's Covid-19 response.

Since January 2022, Solomon Islands has been affected by community transmission of COVID-19, which has spread across several regions of the country. Reports from across the country indicate that Solomon Islands is in the midst of a wave of Delta and/or Omicron.

Team Leader and Public Health Specialist, Ms Eunice Chege said:

We did a rapid assessment of the COVID situation at both hospitals and found a number of issues including not having in place proper standard operating procedures, lack of proper case management and care of patients among others.

Twenty-five participants including three from Atoifi hospital in East Malaita took part in the two weeks of training and mentorship since Friday 1 April 2022.

The Public Health Specialist said despite Kilu'ufi and Atoifi hospitals being very old with equipment capacity issues, she hopes participants will utilise the knowledge and skills gained through the training to respond to COVID-19 cases efficiently.

Dr. Eunice Chege the UK Emergency Medical Team Leader said the team is honoured to support the Solomon Islands:

It is my hope that we shall make a difference though training and mentorship in the provinces as this brings better access and quality health care closer to the people.

The team consists of 10 experienced staff, including doctors, nurses and humanitarian health programme management experts from the UK, Netherlands, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Italy.

They will provide on-the-job clinical support as well as training and capacity building in infection prevention and control and COVID-19 case management to health professionals in Solomon Islands.

The team have six more weeks in the country to work with community and health workers.

British High Commissioner to Solomon Islands and Nauru, His Excellency Thomas Coward said:

COVID-19 has negatively affected Solomon Islands' health system and economy, with the number of daily cases being a real concern. The deployment of the UK Emergency Medical Team will provide expertise to Solomon Islands health care professionals, building their capacity to respond better and more effectively to the on-going health crisis and ultimately save lives.

The deployment of the UK Emergency Medical Team will help address critical gaps in the COVID-19 response by providing assistance in the provision of direct interventional clinical support to allow local practitioners to better handle patients with varying levels of acuity, and to operate in a safe and secure manner.