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PRESS RELEASE PR26-087

April 10, 2026

DPHSS Confirms Pertussis Outbreak in Guam

Hagåtña, Guam – The Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) received **two** new laboratory confirmed *Bordetella pertussis (pertussis)* reports this week, bringing the total number of confirmed cases for 2026 to **nine**. Epidemiologic investigation identified a link to a childcare setting, confirming the first pertussis outbreak in Guam.

DPHSS is actively implementing public health response measures, including continued case investigation, contact tracing, and coordination with the affected facility to limit further transmission. DPHSS continues to monitor respiratory illness trends locally, nationally, and regionally.

Pertussis, or whooping cough, is a vaccine-preventable disease. It is a highly contagious respiratory infection caused by bacteria and is primarily spread by direct contact with discharge from the nose and throat of infected individuals. It can cause severe coughing fits (up to 10 weeks or more), followed by a high-pitched “whoop” sound when breathing in. Vomiting and exhaustion may also follow. Pertussis can lead to serious complications, especially in infants, such as pneumonia, dehydration, seizures, and brain damage. Some infants may not cough at all. Instead, they may have apnea (life-threatening pauses in breathing) or struggle to breathe.

DPHSS continues to encourage parents to protect their infants and young children by minimizing exposure (close contact) to persons who have cold symptoms or cough illness. DPHSS advises the community to take the following preventative measures:

- **Get Vaccinated**
 - People of all ages need the pertussis or whooping cough vaccines
 - DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis) vaccination for infants and young children.
 - Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis) vaccination for adolescents and adults, including pregnant women during the 27-36th week of each pregnancy.

- **Reduce Your Risk**
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick and avoid contact with people if you are sick.
 - Stay home if you are experiencing flu like symptoms.
 - Cover your coughs and sneezes with tissues and wash your hands regularly.
 - Sanitize high-touched surfaces
- **Seek Immediate Care For Symptoms**
 - If you think you or someone else has pertussis, see your doctor immediately.
 - Follow your doctor's recommendations, wear a mask, and cover your cough/sneeze with a tissue to help stop the spread.

Vaccination Information

DTaP and Tdap vaccines provided by DPHSS through the Vaccines For Children (VFC) Program are for children 18 years and under who are not insured, enrolled in Medicaid or MIP, or are underinsured. Individuals may also call the Bureau of Family Health and Nursing Services (BFHNS) located in the NRCHC at (671) 634-7408 for more information on clinic hours and location.

Pertussis vaccinations are also available at the DPHSS Guam Community Health Centers (CHC) for eligible individuals, including those who are uninsured, underinsured, or enrolled in Medicaid or private insurance. Residents are encouraged to contact their healthcare provider or the DPHSS CHC locations for more information on vaccine eligibility.

Individuals with private health insurance must contact their primary healthcare provider for vaccine availability.

Vaccinations are available at:

- Northern Region Community Health Center (NRCHC): (671) 635-7412
- Southern Region Community Health Center (SRCHC): (671) 828-7511

Upcoming Immunization Events

Friday, April 24, 2026 – Get Immunized, Guam! Protect Your Future Immunization Outreach at Micronesia Mall Center Court from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

When to Seek Care

If you are experiencing flu or pertussis-like symptoms you are encouraged to contact your primary care provider. We appreciate your assistance in taking precautionary measures to protect yourself and the health of the community.

More Information

Residents can view the latest surveillance figures regarding respiratory illness and historical data on the official Guam Communicable Disease dashboard at <https://elc.guam.gov/epi-reports>.

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