

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 20-17

RE: C.R NO. 20-18/H&SA

SUBJECT: ACCEPTING A GRANT FROM THE U.S.DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND HUMAN SERVICES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$250,000.

SEPTEMBER 20, 2017

The Honorable Wesley W. Simina
Speaker, Twentieth Congress
Federated States of Micronesia
Second Regular Session, 2017

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee on Health and Social Affairs to which was
referred C.R. No. 20-18, entitled:

"A RESOLUTION APPROVING AND ACCEPTING A GRANT IN THE AMOUNT
OF \$250,000 FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICES, SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
ADMINISTRATION, TO SUPPORT AND FUND THE FSM DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS OPIOID STATE TARGETED RESPONSE
PROJECT, INCLUDING ALL THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE
ASSISTANCE.",

Begs leave to report as follows:

The intent and purpose of this resolution are expressed in its
title.

Your Committee held a hearing on July 12, 2017. The witnesses
present included the Department of Health and Social Affairs,
including the Secretary and key staff.

A summary of activities and budget details for the grant is with
the Committee and is available for review.

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The Department explained that opioid addiction usually begins with abuse of prescription painkillers. Patients prescribed opioids for severe pain later become addicted to the drug. This is a major problem in the U.S. where patients are able buy opioids illegally on the black markets after their prescriptions runs out, so they can continue their addiction. Thousands of deaths from opioid overdose have been reported in the U.S. in the last several years.

That being said, the Department conceded that this is not yet a serious problem in the FSM and that there are only 6 known cases of adults with opioid addiction. One reason for this is that the distribution of opioids is closely controlled and there is no significant illegal market where users can purchase opioids once their prescriptions have ended.

However, the Department emphasized that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. This grant will enable to the Department to engage in investigation and community education which may help keep this U.S. problem from coming to the FSM. Further, the grant is broad enough that it can be used to address the general problem of prescription drug abuse. The program, if properly implemented, will help the Department identify other areas where further action is needed.

Your Committee was initially concerned that the Department was just attempting to get free grant money when there was no real need for the proposed program. However after hearing the testimony from the Department, your Committee is satisfied that grant will serve a useful purpose and could help prevent the opioid epidemic from reaching our shores. If only one overdose death is prevented, it will have been a grant well used.

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CONCLUSION

Your Committee on Health and Social Affairs is in accord with the intent and purpose of C.R. No. 20-18 and recommends its adoption in the form attached hereto.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Ferny S. Perman
Ferny S. Perman, chairman

Alik L. Alik, vice chairman

/s/ Tiwiter Aritos
Tiwiter Aritos, member

Florencio S. Harper, member

/s/ David W. Panuelo
David W. Panuelo, member

/s/ Joseph J. Urusemal
Joseph J. Urusemal, member

/s/ Derensio S. Konman
Derensio S. Konman, member