STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 21-38

RE: C.R. NO. 21-99/H&SA

SUBJECT: APPROVING A GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF $821,849 FROM THE U.S. DHHS, CDC.

JANUARY 31, 2020

The Honorable Wesley W. Simina
Speaker, Twenty-First Congress
Federated States of Micronesia
Third Regular Session, 2020

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee on Health and Social Affairs to which was referred C.R. 21-99, entitled:


begs leave to report as follows:

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

Your Committee held a hearing on January 29, 2020. The witnesses present included: Secretary Livinson Taulung, Immunization Program Manager Carter Apaisam, MCH Program Dionisio Saimon, MCH Financial Specialist Vicky Wilkauler, CD Medication Director Mayleen Ekiek, Financial Specialist Takiko Ifamitik, AO DHSA Scott Mori, FP Coordinator Stanley
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Micky and Jun Bacalondo representing the Justice Department.

Chairman Perman welcomed the witnesses and members and asked Secretary Taulung to open up the hearing. Secretary Taulung noted that this is a grant for funding to continue the Program that has been in effect for 5 years.

Dr. Ekiek noted that this program has been in operation for many years. The Program supports prevention activities in the states. She mentioned that the program is currently on hold, waiting for the resolution to pass in order to continue services. She stressed that they cannot continue their activities without funding. She noted that all January activities are pending approval of the resolution. There are approximately 10,000 cases of hepatitis in the FSM. The program also funds STD education.

Senator Urusemal inquired as to how much of the funding was being used for personnel. Dr. Ekiek responded that approximately half of the funding, $400,000 is for personnel. Senator Urusemal asked if the programs are having an impact on the Nation. Dr. Ekiek shared that they now have screening for hepatitis on island. She noted that the FSM has a low prevalence of HIV. She also stressed that with regards to STD education, they provide education and condoms, however, it is up to individuals to decide if they are going to use them. She also shared that they have testing for several other STDs available locally. She stated that the multi-resistant strain of TB in Chuuk has been eradicated and they are doing a mass screening in March in Chuuk.

Chairman Perman inquired as to the equipment cost being zero. Dr. Ekiek responded that previous grants were used for equipment for local testing and they procure equipment as needed. Currently they have the necessary equipment for testing for this grant. She noted that if Congress can fund reagents and testing supplies, that would be helpful.
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Secretary Taulung noted that regarding Hepatitis, there is improvement, there are less people showing complications from Hepatitis. He said that some people are tested outside the FSM. Generally speaking, Hepatitis has the worst outcomes. This funding is vital and they are saving lives with this funding.

Chairman Perman inquired as to some of the line items listed. He noted there is $30,000 for supplies listed. He inquired as to the large amount for personnel, equal to almost half of the grant. He also noted that there was another large amount listed for travel. He asked if the travel was within the FSM. Dr. Ekiek agreed that a large portion was used for personnel, due to the nature of the grant, it requires a lot of people on the ground. She noted that most of the travel is within the FSM, however, there are mandatory meetings that require travel outside of the FSM.

Dr. Ekiek shared that the 2019 data for Pohnpei was 18 cases of TB and Chuuk had 77 cases. Pohnpei cases are mostly adults, however in Chuuk, some are in the less than 5 years old category and a few in the 5-10 year olds.

Floor Leader asked if there was data regarding STD rates for each state. Dr. Ekiek stated that she did not have the data here, but she will provide it.

There was a discussion regarding the new law and the annual grant reporting requirements to Congress. Chairman Perman noted that as Chairman of Health and Social Affairs, he needs to be provided with current and accurate data. He noted that he attends conferences and meetings for which he requires this information and he needs to have data to support grant requests in an expeditious manner.

Your Committee on Health and Social Affairs is in accord with the intent and purpose of C.R. No. 21-99, and recommends its adoption in the form attached hereto.
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Respectfully submitted,

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

/s/ Tiwiter Aritos /
Tiwiter Aritos, vice chairman

/s/ Esmond B. Moses /
Esmond B. Moses, member

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

/s/ Aren B. Palik /
Aren B. Palik, member

/s/ Florencio S. Harper /
Florencio S. Harper, member

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