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“Governor Commends DOH for Swift Response.”

"Emergency First Responders acted swiftly and efficiently to move the traveler into isolation, while DOH and partnering agencies initialized contact tracing protocols."

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In a Press Conference Friday, September 17th, 2021, Lieutenant Governor Talauega announced that the Department of Public Health (DOH) had confirmed one positive COVID-19 case after receiving the first round of tests from quarantined travelers. The travelers arrived on September 13th, on the first Hawaiian Airlines commercial flight since the borders shut down in March 2020. The highly-trained American Samoa Emergency First Responders acted swiftly and efficiently to move the traveler into isolation, while DOH and partnering agencies initialized contact tracing protocols. DOH Officials will send the test sample to the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) laboratory to determine the variant.

"I would first like to commend the swift actions by the Emergency First Responders together with the coordination efforts by the EOC and DOH that resulted in early detection and quick containment. I am confident in the work of the GAR and medical professionals and know that they will do what they can to protect the health and safety of our Territory. Faafetai, faafetai tele lava," shared Governor Lemanu before the press conference from his quarantine quarters in an exclusive Zoom discussion with leaders.

He continued, "ASG first responders and the Covid Task Force have been working around the clock to put the proper protocols and policies in place for the safeguarding of American Samoa. I am proud to say that the Safe Travels American Samoa (STAS) initiative is highly effective and gives American Samoa the best chance at combating COVID-19 as it attempts to enter our shores."

"I also highly encourage the people of American Samoa to keep calm and remain vigilant. It would be best if you continue receiving your vaccinations to prepare your families further. Yes, you can still contract COVID when you are fully vaccinated, but the vaccination gives you the best fighting chance at recovery. I want to reiterate that the number of deaths is highest among

the unvaccinated. I have heard many have questioned the vaccinations, stating there are no longitudinal studies on their effects. The truth is, we should look towards the attitudes of our brothers and sisters in Samoa. During the measles outbreak of 2019, they experienced 83 deaths. The majority of them were children. This outbreak was a perfect example of what happens to unimmunized communities. Now, Samoa has approximately 97 thousand of their eligible population with at least one COVID-19 Vaccination shot."

"The situation is under control. There is no need to panic. The EOC, emergency first responders, and COVID-19 Task Force are doing a great job pushing out information."

"I would like to ask you to lean on your Faith. I ask that we continue to pray for all Emergency First Responders and their families. Pray for the infected traveler. Pray for those who have lost their loved ones to COVID, and pray for healing among survivors. May we continue to pray for our leaders for making the tough decision. God Bless you all, and God Bless American Samoa."

The Governor encourages the general public that at this time, the Territory should take simple daily precautions:

- Wear a mask
- Social distance
- Wash your hands
- Constantly disinfect surfaces and sanitize your hands
- Get vaccinated