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“Governor Lemanu Convenes with Cabinet in Moving Forward Amid COVID-19 Pandemic”

“Whatever stone is casted our way, our priority remains the same as in the beginning, to provide the best quality of service to the people of our Territory. I ask you to continue to serve wholeheartedly, honestly, and humbly.”

On April 20, 2022, at 9:00am, the Lemanu-Talauega administration held its second virtual cabinet meeting.

“During these challenging times, many of our leaders have been questioned, however, I urge you all to remain steadfast in your calling,” Governor Lemanu P.S. Mauga stated in his opening remarks. He encouraged the cabinet to remember the cornerstone of which the American Samoa Government was built upon, “It is God Whom we trust to grant us the wisdom to lead our people.”

He continued his heartening remarks recalling when he and Lieutenant Governor Talauega were selecting their Cabinet Appointees, “God blessed us with a foresight of choosing you as leaders. We chose you as esteemed Leaders with the assurance that your prior experiences and your credibility qualified you to serve. During this difficult time, you have all exceeded our expectations, and we thank you for your service to the people of American Samoa.”

In his final remarks, Governor Lemanu recited the London Missionaries Society Hymn number 143, a Psalm of King David:

*Le Alii e, ia malulu mai
O matou loto fatu nei
Foa'i mai ia le loto fou
Le loto lava e lelei*

“This hymn summarizes the guidance we need as leaders. Whatever stone is casted our way, our priority remains the same as in the beginning, to provide the best quality of service to the people of our Territory. I ask you to continue to serve wholeheartedly, honestly, and humbly,” Lemanu stated in his final reassurances to the Cabinet.

COVID-19 UPDATES

Director Motusa Tuileama Nua reported that American Samoa's COVID-19 cumulative positive cases count as of April 19, 2022, is 5,647. Of these positive cases, **4,965 have recovered**. We currently have a cumulative number of 22 deaths. Director Nua affirmed that 83.9% of American Samoa's population are fully vaccinated.

PLANS TO REOPEN SCHOOLS

Director Talauega Asaeli presented the Department of Education's (DOE) Hybrid Plan to reopen schools for in-class instruction on alternating days. Early Childhood Education (ECE), Kindergarten, and Grades One through Four will continue virtual learning from home. Grade Five to High School Seniors will have a staggered schedule, one day per week in-class instructions, four days virtual learning from home. Only eighth graders and High School seniors will have a schedule of two days a week in-class instructions, and three days of virtual learning from home.

School meals will be provided everyday for all students. They will be served at the schools for those attending in-class learning, and delivered to the homes of the students doing virtual learning.

FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET

Deputy Director Aukuso Satia reiterated the Budget Call memo that was sent out to all Departments/Agencies. The Fiscal Year 2023 Budget due date is May 13, 2022. He requested the Cabinet to construct their Budget to prioritize the critical operations of their respective departments/agencies, among the other guidelines provided by the memo.

After the department presentations, Lieutenant Governor Talauega commended cabinet members for their diligence during the COVID-19 surge. "Today marks 59 days since the first community outbreak, I applaud your responses and resiliency. There are a lot of changes in our way of life, however God has seen us through our hardships," stated Lieutenant Governor Talauega. He highlighted the decline in the positive COVID cases reported by the Department of Health, providing a brief comparison in his statement, "Since February 21st, our highest reported number in positive cases in one day was 386 on March 24th; on April 4th, DOH reported 3,116 active cases. As of April 19th, DOH reported 36 positive cases in one day bringing the total of active cases to 596."

"Our heartfelt condolences to our families who have lost a loved one due to this pandemic. Our continued prayers are with you all." remarked Lieutenant Governor Talauega. He continued, "As we see the decline in our positive cases and a high rate of recovered cases, let us continue to safeguard our Territory by abiding to the precautions and policies presented by our medical experts, and continue our priorities to the people of American Samoa; do not let COVID stand in the way of our primary duties. May we continue to depend on God's grace as we move forward," stated Lieutenant Governor Talauega in his closing statement.

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