FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 10, 2020

Guam Launches COVID Alert Mobile App
Apple Google technology protects user privacy & helps with contact tracing

Hagåtña, Guam - The Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS), in partnership with the Office of the Governor and Office of Technology, today unveiled the Guam COVID Alert app, an exposure notification app that has the ability to alert users if they have been exposed to other app users who have been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Guam is the first U.S. Territory to launch an exposure notification app developed by engineers with Apple, Google, and the PathCheck Foundation that uses Bluetooth technology for digital contact tracing.

"Our island, much like the rest of the globe, is at war with an invisible enemy. But we don't have to fight empty handed. While we know the effectiveness of contact tracing, when done manually it can be a time consuming process for our Public Health officials," said Governor Lou Leon Guerrero. "The Guam COVID Alert app digitizes contact tracing efforts and empowers each of us to stop the spread of the virus and save lives."

"In addition to wearing our face masks, social distancing, and practicing good hygiene, streamlining our processes through technology will ensure we get to recovery sooner, rather than later," said Lieutenant Governor Josh Tenorio. "Without compromising our privacy, the Guam COVID Alert app helps us help Public Health in contact tracing investigations."

Guam COVID Alert is based on the PathCheck solution designed to work with the Google Apple Exposure Notification (GAEN) application programming interface (API). GAEN uses Bluetooth in iOS and Android mobile phones to securely and confidentially identify when people may have been exposed to COVID-19 through the sharing of random keys that are automatically generated.

This app proactively alerts an individual of an exposure notification, allowing the recipient to be informed and take the necessary steps to self-quarantine, seek medical attention and reduce potential exposure to others over the next 14 days.

Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 will receive a unique randomized code from a DPHSS official which can be entered by the user into the Guam COVID Alert app to verify the positive report. Other app users who may have been in close contact to an individual who reported a positive diagnosis will then get alerted to an exposure notification through the app.

By having a better understanding of who is potentially infected and laying low over the next several weeks, Guam can reduce the rate of transmission between individuals and stop the spread of COVID-19. Digital contact tracing is meant to augment manual contact tracing.

"Our team at DPHSS, along with countless healthcare professionals, have been at the forefront of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are excited about what the Guam COVID Alert app can do to help our team of contact tracers and investigators at Public Health contain the spread and reduce the numbers on our island," said Art San Agustin, Acting Director of DPHSS. "This is a fight we must all join together and I want to encourage everyone to be a part of the COVID fight by downloading this app."

"It's an incredible privilege to be working with Guam and many other jurisdictions in the US and worldwide pioneering technology to fight the pandemic," said Ramesh Raskar, Co-founder and Chief Scientist of PathCheck Foundation. "We're a mission driven organization focused on providing customizable technology to help public health authorities implement solutions to complement their other tools to contain the pandemic."

The Guam COVID Alert mobile app is now available for download from the App store and Google Play. For more information, visit guamcovidalert.guam.gov.

###