

## PRESS RELEASE

### **The FSM Embassy in D.C. continued its effort with the U.S. Government to expedite full implementation of Medicaid eligibility for FSM citizens in the U.S.**

Washington D.C., April 25, 2021 – The Embassy of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) in D.C. continued its on-going effort in working with the relevant U.S. Government agencies calling for a full implementation of Medicaid eligibility for FSM citizens residing throughout the United States.

In December 2020, the U.S. Congress enacted a law restoring Medicaid eligibility for citizens of Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the FSM, living in the United States. In what was viewed by many as a Congressional oversight through the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, the three countries commonly referred to as the Freely Associated States (FAS) were inadvertently left off Medicaid eligibility, which left many of their citizens struggling to meet the high cost of healthcare in the U.S.

In February 2020, Ambassador Akillino H. Susaia communicated in a letter to Ms. Elizabeth Richter, Acting Administrator for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), his appeal for expeditious and full implementation of Medicaid eligibility for FSM citizens after it became apparent that full implementation of the said law is far from being achieved as it varies from state to state across the United States. Ambassador's action followed an effort led by the Hawaii Congressional delegation in the U.S. Congress that had sought through a letter to CMS for a timeline of full implementation of the law and to keep the delegation apprised on regular updates.

Later in March 2021, the Embassy partnered with the COFA Alliance National Network – Texas Chapter (CANN-TX), a FAS citizens advocacy organization, in a meeting with officials from the State of Texas putting forth an appeal for Texas' implementation of the Medicaid eligibility for FSM citizens.

Through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) with its *Region 9 Office* in San Francisco, the Embassy carried on the same discussions on Medicaid to highlight Medicaid eligibility in the respective jurisdictions of Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Guam, and CNMI. In a correspondence this month of April with *HHS Office Region 10*, the Embassy requested for a partnership with the Office which was received favorably, to focus on the states of Alaska and Idaho. The States of Washington and Oregon, which are part of *HHS Region 10 Office*, are seen as advanced ahead of most states in the implementation of citizens' Medicaid eligibility.

The Embassy will continue its advocacy work on behalf of the citizens of the FSM residing in the United States to restore full implementation of Medicaid eligibility. Please do call the Embassy at (202)223-4383 should you have any questions.