

The Experience of International Medical Evacuation for Citizens Abroad During COVID-19 Pandemic at Kaohsiung International Airport

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Abstract

When citizens abroad suffer severe injury or illness, they might encounter several situations, such as expensive fees, impoverished medical resources or language barrier. However, by taking international medical evacuation, citizens abroad can continue their treatment after back to Taiwan. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan announced border restrictions and initiated strict quarantine measures immediately. In August 2020, Taiwan Centers for Disease Control (TCDC) also established guidelines for Taiwan citizens applying for international medical evacuation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During September 2020 to September 2021, there had been eleven patients entered to Kaohsiung International Airport by international medical evacuation. Three of them, including one confirmed COVID-19 patient, had suspected symptoms of COVID-19 and were reported by quarantine officers to the Smart Quarantine Multifunctional System (SQMS), with which the local health authority would be able to follow up these patients. To be prepared for the first entry of confirmed COVID-19 patient to Kaohsiung International Airport, Kaohsiung-Pingtung regional center of TCDC held several training sessions of donning and doffing the personal protective equipment to staffs from different units in advance, and also coached them on the scene. To facilitate the entry of the evacuated patients more efficiently, we will gain experience by learning from every execution.

Keywords: International Medical Evacuation, quarantine, COVID-19, Kaohsiung International Airport, border quarantine

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