

**LOCAL**

Saturday, August 08, 2009

**4th Medical Battalion arrives for training, free clinics**By Nazario Rodriguez Jr.  
Reporter

The crew of the 4th Medical Battalion, composed of 37 U.S. Marines and Navy personnel, arrived yesterday for the Innovative Readiness Training and free clinic at the Commonwealth Health Center starting Monday.

IRT officer-in-charge Capt. Anita M. Kobuszewski said they are excited to be here and serve the community.

The readiness training will be held at two venues: the Kagman High School cafeteria and the American Memorial Park. The free medical and dental clinics will be held at the Commonwealth Health Center from Aug. 10 to 14 and from Aug. 17 to 21.

Medical Director Dr. Richard Brostrom said, however, that the free dental clinic is already fully booked, as this is primarily for children with special needs.

The free medical clinic, however, is open to the general public.

Kobuszewski explained that Dr. Brostrom had earlier asked for the IRT through the CNMI Secretary of Health and the Office of the CNMI Governor.

She said the U.S. Defense Secretary immediately approved the request last year and assigned the 4th Medical Battalion to conduct the mission.

"This is a benchmark program," Kobuszewski said during a press briefing at the Department of Public Health yesterday noon.

In a way, she said, they are also here for a site survey because they intend to come back next year and extend the IRT training and medical/dental clinics to the islands of Rota and Tinian.

"We're hoping to set a standard and we're happy to be here. We're excited," she said.

The Department of Public Safety will provide security and crowd control during these activities.

The scope of care provided will include both medical and dental services. The medical focus will include some specialist care including neurology. The general medicine focus will be on diabetes mellitus and hypertension disease; optometry services may also be provided.

The dental component will include specialty dental care, with an emphasis on pediatric dentistry services. It will specifically target children with "special needs."

Brostrom said that priority patients are those who do not have medical insurance.

CHC will conduct the usual screening process.

"Appointment should be made for the regular health screening process at the hospital," Kobuszewski said.

The 37 crewmembers consist of physicians, pharmacists, biomedical doctors and technicians, dentists, physical therapists, and nurses.

A wellness day with a prevention focus is in the planning phase and may be offered in the community midway through the IRT exercise. Highlights of the wellness day would include healthy weight, nutrition,

exercise/fitness, sports injury prevention, tobacco cessation, suicide prevention, oral health, diabetes mellitus and hypertension prevention.

Continuing education opportunities will be made available to local Saipan medical and dental providers, taught by 4th Medical Battalion and 4th Dental Battalion providers.

“We are both honored and excited to provide valuable training for our sailors and Marines and at the same time work alongside the medical and dental staff of the CHC to provide medical and dental care to the residents of Saipan,” Kobuszewski.

“This evolution provides both the 4th Medical Battalion and the 4th Dental Battalion personnel valuable training in an expeditionary environment and on rapidly deploying to a location, developing advanced medical, dental and logistics training. Further, we will prepare the way ahead for follow-on IRT and Civil Assistance Program operations in the CNMI,” said Kobuszewski.

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