



# PRESS RELEASE

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**For future nursing assistants, UOG learning goes on – even in storm aftermath**

The devastating aftermath of Typhoon Mawar did not stop some of Guam’s future healthcare workers from continuing their education or entering the workforce, thanks to collaborations between Guam Memorial Hospital and the University of Guam.

All 19 students in the UOG Certified Nursing Assistant Program had five lecture sessions remaining when UOG lost power and water due to the storm, said Marissa Anderson, Clinical Nurse Practitioner and Educator who heads the CNA program at UOG.

Dr. Kathryn Wood, interim Dean of the School of Health, reached out to Christine Tuquero, GMH Nursing Administrator. GMH agreed to provide one of its meeting rooms for the CNA program’s remaining class sessions. Once the sessions are complete, CNA students will get trained on actual caregiving at the Skilled Nursing Unit Facility in Barrigada Heights.

Dr. Wood and Anderson did not expect all 19 students to continue their classes because storm recovery had taken priority for many Guam residents, but to their surprise, not one of the students dropped out.

Of the 19, two students had to cope with losing their homes.

Arniela Dimabuyu is one of the CNA students whose home was destroyed. She has lived with her parents and siblings in the home for 18 years, and most of the roof got ripped away, causing damage to the family’s belongings. Her dad has installed a

temporary roof cover so the family didn't have to move while waiting for FEMA to provide assistance to rebuild the home.

Despite her situation at home, Dimabuyu said she's even more determined to complete the program so she can gain experience in the healthcare field. Ultimately, her goal is to become a registered nurse.

"My family is going through a lot, but I didn't want that to stop me from finishing the CNA program – especially since I started off strong," Dimabuyu said.

#### Quick action on new nursing graduates

Another collaboration between UOG and GMH has led to fast-tracked employment for five of the most recent graduates of the University's nursing program.

Through the Graduate Nurse Working Permit, five UOG graduates or nearly a third of the nursing program graduates who received their diplomas on May 21, 20223 – just two days before Typhoon Mawar hit – have secured jobs at GMH.

The permit allows new graduates to get working right away while waiting for their licensure exam and process to get credentialed as nurses through the Guam Board of Nurse Examiners.

The normal process can take months, but GMH can utilize the working permit in the event of staff shortages, as was the case during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It usually takes a few months, so that is a very quick turnaround. I sent the memo one day, and GMH Hospital Administrator Lillian Posadas and Nursing Services Administrator Christine Tuquero – sent a memo forward and boom. It's done!" said Dr. Wood.

Dr. Wood noted that Posadas and Tuquero are both alumni of UOG.

The collaboration shows that, said Dr. Wood, "Tritons are helping Tritons."

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#### **Photo caption**

Marissa Anderson, Clinical Nurse Practitioner and Educator with the University of Guam Certified Nursing Assistant program, first from left, and Jen Salas, who assists Anderson with the program, first from right, are seen with the CNA students outside Guam Memorial Hospital on June 14, 2023. The students are seen in green scrubs, from left, front row: Kaylah Roduk; Arniela Dimabuyu; Kyla Mercado; Yvanna Guzman; Jerene Donato; Samara Cruz; and Nicole Mejia. From left, back row: Brittney Aichem;

Hannah Maxino; Tiana Damon; Vince Verango; Jennifer Wiley; Kimberly Besabe; Jessalynn Chiguina; Amy Robert; Ha'ane Wright; and Jomayne Guzman.

*Photo courtesy University of Guam*