

# PRESS RELEASE



## TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

Office of the High Commissioner

Saipan, Mariana Islands

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Marianas

### NEW DIRECTOR FOR PUBLIC HEALTH NAMED FOR TRUST TERRITORY

Truk

Saipan, Mariana Islands, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Apr. 23 . . . Dr. William M. Peck has been named the new director for the Department of Public Health for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, High Commissioner William R. Norwood announced Friday, April 23. Presently working in Malawi, Central Africa, Dr. Peck is expected to assume his duties in early June.

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An associate professor in epidemiology at the University of North Carolina's School of Public Health, Dr. Peck was assigned to his African station in 1964 to supervise health programs conducted in that country by the university. He works closely with the Malawi Ministry of Health and supervises 41 Peace Corps Volunteers as well as African health workers. Designing health projects for Malawi, Dr. Peck also trains the workers and compiles data to analyze the projects' effectiveness.

Marshalls

Yap

Not a newcomer to the Pacific, Dr. Peck worked in Guam from 1959-1964 as head of that island's Division of Public Health. While there, he helped coordinate health programs with the Trust Territory's medical director. In 1958 he was stationed on Rongelap in the Marshalls Islands as a commissioned officer in charge of a Joint Task Force from the U.S. Public Health Service to observe four months of atomic bomb testing in the surrounding area.

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Dr. Peck said one of his first duties will be to get acquainted with administrative procedures and the complex health problems that exist in the islands. He then plans to tour the districts and spend as much time as possible working in the field. His major interest is in learning how to prevent health problems as well as how to cure health disorders.

Mr. James Hawkins, Assistant Commissioner for Community Services in charge of the Department of Public Health, said, "We are delighted to have Dr. Peck join us. He will bring to the Trust Territory a wealth of experience which is well suited to our health program and which will permit important new developments, especially in the area of preventive health."

In commenting about Dr. Peck's selection, High Commissioner William R. Norwood said, "I am gratified that with the selection of Dr. Peck, we have filled an important position which has been vacant for more than a year. I am especially grateful to Dr. Luke Howe, who has served as acting director during this difficult and demanding period. His tireless work, including matters of emergency nature such as the Palau typhoon in March, plus his attention to difficult administrative duties were most helpful."

Upon Dr. Peck's arrival to take over his duties, Dr. Howe will resume his former position as assistant director of public health.

After receiving his doctor's degree in 1937, Dr. Peck worked as a resident or clinical physician and as the medical director of the North Carolina Sanatorium. In 1957 he received a master's degree in public health from the University of North Carolina.

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Dr. Peck has published 22 scientific articles on chest diseases, as well as a long poem printed in Harper's magazine in 1964 about Merizo, Guam, where the doctor and his family lived.

He said he makes a point of "getting to know" the people with whom he is working by either living among them or learning their customs and language so that he can join in their activities. He moved to Merizo in order to be closer to the Guamanians. In Africa, he has a grass hut in the village that he and his wife use on weekends.

After being interviewed for several days at the Trust Territory headquarters on Saipan, Dr. Peck left Thursday, April 26, for Honolulu. There he will visit the University of Hawaii School of Public Health and his daughter, who is working toward a master's degree in philosophy at the university. Dr. Peck will then go to Washington, D.C., for meetings with persons in the Department of the Interior.

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