


Office of the City Manager

November 7, 2014

To: Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers
From: Christine Daniel, City Manager 
Subject: **Ebola Preparedness**

Under the leadership of the Public Health division in the Health, Housing & Community Services Department (HHCS), the City has been preparing to monitor possible travelers arriving from Ebola-affected countries, and for the possibility of a case or suspected case of Ebola in our community. The Ebola outbreak remains confined to the three West African countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. New cases in those countries are no longer increasing exponentially, but the outbreak is by no means under control.

All travelers from the three Ebola-affected countries are being directed to five airports (all of which are on the East Coast or Chicago) and are screened for symptoms upon arrival. All travelers from those countries who are exhibiting symptoms are being immediately isolated and provided with appropriate medical care. In accordance with CDC and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) guidelines, City of Berkeley Public Health will be notified of travelers from those countries who plan to reside in Berkeley. Public Health will be responsible for assessing and monitoring those travelers. If a traveler is deemed to be at significant risk of becoming ill, Public Health is prepared to restrict their movements as necessary, and facilitate their prompt and safe access to medical care if they become ill. Providing medical care in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea is key to controlling the spread of the virus. There is a possibility a Berkeley community member will participate in the humanitarian and medical response to the Ebola outbreak abroad, and thus require public health monitoring upon return.

The HHCS Department Operations Center (DOC) is activated and meeting weekly to coordinate citywide preparedness. City departments including Fire, Police, City Attorney, and HHCS are actively engaged in the preparedness effort. Partner agencies with which we are working include UC Berkeley, Alta Bates Hospital, LifeLong Medical Care, BUSD, and community health care providers. In addition, we are coordinating preparedness efforts with other Bay Area health jurisdictions and with CDPH.

In addition to the safety of arriving travelers and the community, City of Berkeley preparedness efforts include planning for the safety of health care workers and others who may come in contact with Ebola patients in the course of their work. Ensuring access to appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and training in its proper use is a major focus of the preparedness effort.

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We are working with partners to provide accurate and up-to-date information via regular updates to the City's website, Health Alerts and Advisories to health care providers, staff briefings in person and by e-mail, and participation in City and regional planning efforts. City dispatch screening protocols have been updated to facilitate rapid identification of calls which could be Ebola-related.

State and national guidance, tools, and preparedness are all evolving rapidly, and have strengthened significantly since September 30, 2014, when the CDC confirmed the first U.S. diagnosis of the virus. Staff participates in multiple regular conference calls in order to keep abreast of this dynamic situation. The HHCS DOC and Public Health Division have extensive experience managing local and regional communicable disease control, including DOC activations to manage the response to mumps, measles, tuberculosis exposures, and pertussis (whooping cough). Building on these experiences and on the experience of the national H1N1 flu pandemic of 2009, the City, regional and state public health response is well-coordinated and the Bay Area public health jurisdictions have a strong collaborative baseline from which to prepare.

Key Ebola Facts:

- The biggest risk is to those who have traveled to Guinea, Liberia or Sierra Leone in the last 21 days. Having cared for an individual with Ebola disease, in any country, is also a risk factor.
- Ebola virus is not transmitted by air, water, or food.
- Ebola virus is spread by direct contact with bodily fluids of Ebola-infected individuals *while* they are exhibiting symptoms, such as high fever, diarrhea or vomiting; bodily fluids of symptomatic Ebola carriers enter another person's body through breaks in the skin or by contact with mucous membranes (eyes, nose, mouth, sexual contact).
- It can take 2 to 21 days after exposure to the Ebola virus to develop symptoms and become contagious; symptoms most commonly appear 8-10 days after exposure.
- People are only contagious when they are sick with symptoms, not before.
- There have been no confirmed cases of Ebola in California.

Resources:

CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/ebola/>

CDPH: <http://cdph.ca.gov/programs/cder/Pages/Ebola.aspx>

CDPH Ebola Hotline for the Public (M-F, 8am-5pm): 855-421-5921

cc: Beth Pollard, Interim Deputy City Manager
Ann-Marie Hogan, City Auditor
Jane Micallef, Director of Health, Housing & Community Services
Mark Numainville, City Clerk
Matthai Chakko, Public Information Officer