



Office of the Medical Health Officers
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TO: All Saskatoon Health Region Employees and Physicians
FROM: Dr. Johnmark Opondo, Deputy Medical Health Officer
DATE: Thursday, October 16, 2014
RE: Preparing for Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)

Saskatoon Health Region continues to closely monitor the extensive Ebola outbreaks in the three West African countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia. There have been related cases in Nigeria (Lagos and Port Hartcourt) and Senegal, but these countries have not had new cases in over 21 days. The EVD outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo has tended to follow the traditional EVD outbreaks of the past.

An extensive provincial and regional planning effort is well underway to ensure a coordinated response to EVD. The effort will **ensure health-care providers have the knowledge, tools and training they need to be equipped to handle a patient with EVD.**

In the last week, we have followed the reports of the development of imported cases of EVD in Dallas, Texas and Madrid, Spain. The confirmed cases of EVD in two Texas nurses who provided close care to a confirmed imported EVD case **does not** represent an increased risk to the general community.

While there has never been a case of Ebola in Canada and the risk of Ebola in Canada is very low, it is important that as a health community we are prepared to deal with highly infectious diseases of this nature. Further, the development of secondary cases emphasizes the importance of all health-care providers being comfortable with safely putting-on and removing their own personal protective equipment (PPE). Health-care providers are reminded to be vigilant for symptoms and travel history that might indicate Ebola in any patient who may present for care with fever and should evaluate these patients' risk of exposure to EVD.

Currently, the following items are available to assist all health-care providers in our Region in preparing for and responding to Ebola:

- A [poster for health-care providers](#), for display in work areas, with at-a-glance information on how to respond to a suspected case of Ebola
- A [poster for public areas](#) to assist patients and visitors who have travelled from Ebola-affected areas in understanding Ebola risks and needed actions
- An information sheet on the [personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) required for health-care providers in clinical settings, based on recommendations from Public Health

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Agency of Canada and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (note recommendations for those involved in the transport of EVD patients will be different)

A simulation session to test our recently developed EVD operational and communications plans is scheduled for October 23rd in the Emergency Department at RUH and the Intensive Care Unit at St. Paul's Hospital shortly thereafter. Following the simulations, plans will be refined and an easy to follow manual outlining Region preparedness and response protocols will be provided to you.

I will keep you updated on the planning effort. Feel free to contact me at 306-655-4338 or Director of Enterprise Risk Management Lori Frank at 306-655-7795 with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dr. Johnmark Opondo
M.B., ChB., M.PH.
Deputy Medical Health Officer

NOTE: These recommendations current as of today 16 October 2014 **but** are likely to change as new information about Ebola becomes available. Check the SHR website https://www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca/locations_services/Services/Population-Public/Pages/2014-Ebola.aspx or Ministry of Health <http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/ebola> for updated guidance on a frequent basis at the included links.