



To: CAHAN San Diego Participants  
Date: November 7, 2014

## **Ebola Preparedness Update**

This health advisory updates local healthcare personnel on the ongoing Ebola virus disease (EVD) epidemic in West Africa and related preparedness efforts at national, state, and local levels. Links to updated resources to address risk assessment, infection control, and patient management for EVD are also provided.

### ***Updated Information on Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)***

Epidemic EVD transmission is ongoing in [Guinea](#), [Liberia](#), and [Sierra Leone](#). Although [Nigeria](#) and [Senegal](#) have had imported cases, these countries have been declared EVD-free by the World Health Organization (WHO). [Mali](#) has had one imported case, but no additional cases. Updates on the outbreak and advisories on the affected countries are available at the [CDC 2014 West Africa Ebola Outbreak webpage](#). There is a small, unrelated EVD outbreak currently occurring in the Equateur Province of the [Democratic Republic of Congo](#).

Four EVD cases have been diagnosed in the United States. One was a Liberian who had exposure to EVD before arriving in Texas, and one had been providing healthcare in West Africa before returning to New York City. Two cases were infected in Texas while providing clinical care to the first U.S. EVD patient.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has stated that there are no confirmed or suspect EVD cases under investigation in California at this time.

All travelers from the three countries with ongoing Ebola transmission are screened for risk and symptoms for EVD prior to departure. CDC has instituted a system to screen travelers arriving from these countries and the [level of risk for EVD](#) is assessed in this process. State and local health departments of the final destinations for each traveler are informed so that daily monitoring for EVD symptoms can be conducted for the three-week incubation period. In the last three weeks, 19 individuals have arrived in California after traveling to the affected countries and been monitored by local health departments. All but one individual were assessed as low risk. The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) has monitored several individuals, all of whom were low risk. There is one person being monitored in the county at this time.

### ***Recommendations for Providers and Hospitals***

A travel history **must** be obtained in order to identify a suspect EVD patient. **A travel history should be obtained and documented in every ill patient when an infectious etiology is suspected or possible.** In addition to the recent Ebola advisories, CDC has issued health advisories in the last 12 months on [Chikungunya](#), [H5N1 influenza](#), and [MERS-CoV](#), each of which contains a recommendation to obtain a travel history.

CDC routinely issues [travel advisories](#) to alert clinicians and the public of infectious disease threats to prevent illness before travel and to direct diagnostic efforts for illness after travel. Recent advisories detail outbreaks of [measles in the Philippines](#) and [Vietnam](#), [polio in several countries](#), [Chikungunya virus in South America](#), [Chikungunya in the Caribbean](#), and [dengue in China](#).

Hospitals and healthcare organizations must have a policy or guideline to ensure that potential EVD patients are rapidly identified and effectively managed in accordance with CDC-recommended infection control precautions. The CDC has developed readiness checklists for [hospitals](#) and other [facilities](#) to assist in planning and producing policies and guidelines. Another [checklist for hospital preparedness](#) was also recently developed by CDPH.

Providers should be aware of the policy or guideline at their healthcare organization. Clinicians are encouraged to conduct quality improvement efforts to enhance preparedness. These efforts may include conducting drills, reviewing charts for

documenting travel histories, incorporating alerts for travel screening into electronic health records, and increasing staff familiarity with the personal protective equipment (PPE) required in treating suspect EVD patients.

The CDC has developed an updated [checklist](#) to assist in the evaluation of patients suspected of having EVD and an updated [algorithm](#) to help evaluate travelers returning from affected countries. Specific guidance for [ambulatory care](#) and [emergency department](#) settings has been developed. A CDC poster has been developed for the upcoming influenza season to help patients differentiate between [flu and EVD](#).

The County of San Diego Epidemiology Program should be **notified immediately** when a suspect EVD patient is identified by calling **619-692-8499** during business hours Monday through Friday, or **858-565-5255** after-hours on evenings and weekends. Questions about specimen collection and transport for suspect EVD cases may be directed to the San Diego Public Health Laboratory at 619-692-8500.

UC San Diego Medical Center in Hillcrest has been [identified](#) as the regional Ebola Treatment Center for confirmed Ebola patients. All local hospitals must be able to initially identify, isolate, and provide initial care and assessment of a suspected EVD patient. Each facility should "[Identify, Isolate, and Inform](#)." The case should be identified using travel history and [signs/symptoms](#). Isolation should be in accordance with CDC guidance and using appropriate PPE. San Diego County Epidemiology Program should be informed as soon as the patient is determined to be a suspect Ebola case. However, no suspected or confirmed Ebola patient should be sent to UC San Diego Medical Center without prior consultation with County Public Health Services and acceptance by the Medical Center.

### **CDC, CDPH, and San Diego County Guidance and Resources**

The CDC has provided the updated "[Evaluating Patients for Possible Ebola Virus Disease: Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel and Health Officials](#)." It provides comprehensive links to relevant guidance documents to enhance Ebola preparedness. Of note are links to [Information on Ebola for Healthcare Workers](#), [Safe Management of Patients with EVD in U.S. Hospitals](#), and a [revised algorithm for evaluating patients for EVD risk following travel](#).

CDC periodically updates their [EVD webpage](#) and guidance documents as additional information becomes available, so it is important that each healthcare facility and organization have a designated staff person who checks CDC and CDPH websites **daily** for updates and new information.

CDC also regularly provides key message updates on EVD and other emergency health events to external partners, through the CDC Emergency Partners mailing list. The latest update is attached to this health alert. To sign up for these updates, enter an email address at [https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USCDC/subscriber/new?topic\\_id=USCDC\\_964](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USCDC/subscriber/new?topic_id=USCDC_964). New subscribers to *govdelivery* will be prompted to set messaging preferences and an optional password.

CDPH provides information and guidance on the EVD Response on its [Ebola Virus Information Page](#). This page also contains other resources, including waiting room flyers in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

San Diego County HHS has an [Ebola Information Page](#) with local resources, including fact sheets.

Thank you for your continued participation.

#### **CAHAN San Diego**

County of San Diego, Health & Human Services Agency  
Epidemiology and Immunization Services Branch  
Phone: (619) 692-8499, Fax: (858) 715-6458  
Urgent Phone for pm/weekends/holidays: (858) 565-5255  
E-mail: [cahan@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:cahan@sdcounty.ca.gov)  
Secure Website: <http://cahan.ca.gov>  
Public-Access Website: <http://www.cahansandiego.com>

*CAHAN San Diego Alerts are intended for the use of public health, medical and laboratory professionals in San Diego County. This alert has been approved for reproduction and distribution to interested professionals. An online CAHAN San Diego application is available at <http://www.cahansandiego.com> for appropriate and interested individuals.*