



THE DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Press Release

DHHS Secretary Aldona Wos Says N.C. Has Been Preparing For Ebola

"North Carolina's health care community is ready to identify and respond to a case of Ebola."

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Raleigh, NC -Secretary Aldona Wos said that the Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) Division of Public Health has been working closely with its public health partners and health care providers since July to prepare for the possibility that a patient in North Carolina might be diagnosed with Ebola. Over the past few months, extensive guidance has been sent to health care providers and procedures have been put in place to routinely screen and evaluate patients.

"North Carolina's health care community is ready to identify and respond to a case of Ebola," said Secretary Aldona Wos, M.D. "If a case were to occur in North Carolina, state and local health officials would rapidly identify everyone who was potentially exposed and take immediate measures to prevent further spread. Our public health professionals have extensive training and experience with this type of investigation and response."

Public health officials are actively monitoring for cases using a variety of methods, including surveillance of emergency department visits and collaborating with a network of hospital-based Public Health Epidemiologists. DHHS' State Laboratory of Public Health also has successfully established the capability to rapidly detect Ebola infection using procedures and materials provided by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and United States Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases.

Additionally, public health officials and DHHS' Office of Emergency Medical Services have provided assistance to local EMS agencies with triage and treatment protocols for any potential Ebola patients.

"North Carolina has a strong health care system and a multi-faceted public health infrastructure," added Dr. Wos. "I am confident in the measures in place and the strength of our system. The keys are for all health care providers to take full travel histories from their patients and for good infection control practices to be strictly applied."

Ebola is only contagious after the onset of symptoms. The incubation period before symptoms

may appear is 2-21 days, with 8-10 days being the most common. Ebola is spread through unprotected contact with blood or body fluids from someone who is infected. Anyone who becomes ill within 21 days after traveling to an affected area in West Africa should contact a healthcare provider right away and limit their contact with others until they have been evaluated.

In addition to the current Ebola virus preparedness response, DHHS' Division of Public Health tracks and responds to cases and outbreaks due to other infections, including food-borne, vector-borne and respiratory diseases.

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