

CHATHAM HEALTH DISTRICT

Sewing the Towns of Colchester, East Haddam, East Hampton, Haddam, Hebron, Marlborough & Portland

BOARD MEMBERS

Peter Hughes, Chairman
Mark Walter, Vice Chairman
Andrew Tierney, Treasurer
Susan Bransfield
Rosemary Coyle
Michael Maniscalco
Kate Morris
Melissa Schlag

DISTRICT HEALTH DIRECTOR

Thad D. King, MPH RS

Ebola Update - October 15, 2014

The 2014 Ebola epidemic is the largest in history, affecting 3 countries in West Africa. Although the risk of an Ebola outbreak in the United States is very low, the CDC and local and state officials are taking precautions to prevent this from happening.

Transmission

Ebola is spread through direct contact (broken skin, mucous membranes, e.g., eyes, nose, or mouth)

- Blood or body fluids (including but not limited to urine, saliva, sweat, feces, vomit, breast milk, and semen) of a person who is sick with Ebola.
- Objects (like needles and syringes) that have been contaminated with the virus.
- Infected animals.
- Ebola is not spread through the air or by water, or by food. There is no evidence that mosquitoes or other insects can transmit the Ebola virus. Only mammals, for example, humans, bats, monkeys, and apes have shown to become infected with and spread the Ebola virus.

Symptoms

The early symptoms of Ebola mimic the flu, so much so that most people with Ebola assume that their symptoms are due to the flu. A person with Ebola is not contagious until symptoms appear, between 2 and 21 days after exposure with an average of 8-10 days. Headaches that come and go several times a day and high fevers between 102 and 105 degrees are very common in Ebola. Patients also complain of severe muscle and joint aches, sore throats, severe stomach pains, weakness, substantial weight loss, and loss of appetite. Recovery from Ebola depends on good supportive clinical care and the patient's immune response. People who recover from Ebola infection develop antibodies that last for at least 10 years.

Public Health Response

If a case of Ebola should emerge in our state, response will be a coordinated effort of local public health officials, Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) and likely the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). At this time, state and local Ebola preparedness is as follows:

- A secure electronic surveillance system that provides information sharing and a method for electronically entering, updating, reporting, tracking and monitoring cases and contacts.
- Regularly scheduled conference calls from the state to local health officials.
- Letters to all physicians, nurses and hospitals to increase their vigilance and screening criteria.
- If a patient meets the testing criteria for Ebola, their specimen will go directly to the CDC for testing, bypassing the state health laboratory.
- A support team from the CDC is ready to respond to any new cases which will include experts in infection control, protective equipment and experimental therapies.
- Hospitals have tightened their patient assessments and screening measures to isolate and triage a potential Ebola patient.
- Governor Daniel Malloy signed a precautionary public health emergency order which will allow the Commissioner of the CT DPH to quarantine any person or group who may have been exposed or infected with Ebola.

Isolation and quarantine are public health practices used to stop or limit the spread of disease. They are used to protect the public by preventing exposure from infected persons.

- Isolation – is used to separate and restrict the movement of ill persons who have a communicable disease from those who are healthy. For example, hospitals will isolate patients with infectious diseases.
- Quarantine – is used to separate and restrict the movement of well persons who have been exposed to an infectious disease to see if they become ill.

Early recognition of Ebola is critical for controlling the spread of infection and for providing appropriate patient care. We will continue to monitor and keep you updated on this evolving situation. Please go to the CDC web site for additional information. <http://www.cdc.gov/>

Thank you.



Thad King
Director of Health