



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619

Tel: 617-624-5000
Fax: 617-624-5206
www.mass.gov/dph

DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR

JOHN W. POLANOWICZ
SECRETARY

CHERYL BARTLETT, RN
COMMISSIONER

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

October 1, 2014

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Texas Department of State Health Services on Tuesday, Sept. 30, confirmed the first case of Ebola to be diagnosed in the United States.

There are no Ebola cases in Massachusetts, and the possibility of an Ebola case in the Commonwealth remains very low. Out of an abundance of caution, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health has worked closely over the past several months with health care facilities, doctors and EMS providers to be fully prepared should such a case occur. This is in addition to the Department's ongoing work regarding emergency preparedness and disease prevention.

Massachusetts is well prepared to handle an incidence of Ebola, in the unlikely event that a case should occur in the Commonwealth. The public can have full confidence that our hospitals have the expertise, preparedness and capacity to handle such a situation. The infectious disease controls in Massachusetts and the United States are world class. Should a patient present Ebola symptoms, the patient would be quickly isolated and treated to prevent the spread of this disease.

Ebola is not spread easily. It is not spread through casual contact or the air. Ebola is transmitted through direct contact with the bodily fluids of a sick person, including exposure to contaminated objects, such as needles.

DPH infectious disease, laboratory and emergency preparedness specialists are closely monitoring the ongoing response to Ebola in Africa – just as we do for any other outbreak of illness or disease. Here are some of the activities which are currently underway:

-more-

Public Health Advisory on Ebola, page 2 of 2

- DPH has established a website at mass.gov/dph/ebola to provide clinical advisories and guidance to public health and healthcare organizations and information for the general public.
- DPH, in collaboration with the Boston Public Health Commission, has developed Screening Tools for Evaluating Risk of Ebola Virus Exposure for use by colleges and universities as well as other settings to assess risks of individuals who have traveled in the affected countries.
- DPH is in routine contact with health officials at CDC, who in turn partner with the World Health Organization and other global health organizations to ensure that the latest and most up-to-date information about the Ebola outbreak is available to health agencies around the world.
- The Department has been proactively communicating with doctors, EMS providers, local boards of health, colleges and universities, hospitals and other health care facilities in Massachusetts to share the latest information on the status of the outbreak.
- DPH provided clinical guidance to hospitals and health care providers on identifying suspected cases of Ebola virus, safely handling lab specimens, and appropriate protocols of care for patients.
- DPH is committed to working with our local public health and healthcare partners so that our healthcare system is prepared to effectively respond in the extremely unlikely event that a person with symptoms of Ebola virus arrives here.

###