



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 31, 2014

Contact: Office of Public Affairs 614-644-8562

OHIO ISSUES NEW, STRONGER HEALTH MONITORING AND QUARANTINE PROTOCOLS FOR TRAVELERS RETURNING FROM WEST AFRICA

COLUMBUS – Today the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) strengthened its protocols for managing travelers returning from West African nations that have Ebola outbreaks. The new protocols are stronger than those recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) while still being respectful of travelers and informed by the latest medical considerations for risk and exposure.

Highlights of the new protocols include:

- Returning travelers who had no exposure to a potentially infected person are to:
 - Undergo daily health checks by a public health official for the 21 days of the Ebola incubation period;
 - Record any trips outside their homes;
 - Avoid public places;
 - Remain within their health district unless they can make arrangements for public health officials in the district to which they are traveling to assume their daily monitoring, and;
 - Remain within the United States for their safety and the safety of other travelers.
- Returning travelers who did have exposure to a potentially infected person are to:
 - Be quarantined at home with daily health checks by a public health official for 21 days, and;
 - Possibly be allowed trips outside their homes in some cases, away from public places, if public health officials determine they are at a low risk.

If public health officials have any doubt about a travelers' history or exposure, they should always default to a stronger, safer protocol level.

“Our goal is to keep Ohioans safe, period—both those who travel to West Africa and those who don’t. We’re considering a lot of different needs with these new protocols, landing on the side of protecting Ohioans’ health while still working hard to respect the rights of travelers,” said ODH Director Richard Hodges. “We don’t want to build counterproductive barriers to those who have a desire to volunteer for medical relief efforts. We believe these new protocols are the right approach—strong, common sense, and informed by science—but we’re also continuing to monitor the situation to keep our protocols in the right place to protect Ohioans.”

-more-

ODH will work with local health departments to implement the new monitoring and quarantine protocols, and also meet whatever needs arise from those people who might be placed under a 21-day quarantine.

To help protect the privacy of individuals under quarantine or monitoring, ODH and local health departments do not release their names or other information that could potentially lead to their identification. Traditionally the number of travelers returning to Ohio from West Africa is very low, averaging out to approximately two per day. For the safety of first responders, local health departments will verify a quarantined individual's identity and status in the event first responders must respond to a request for help at the home.

Ohio's stronger health monitoring and quarantine protocols for travelers returning from West Africa can be viewed [here](#).

###

OHIO EBOLA INCIDENT RESPONSE CHRONOLOGY

Oct. 23 **ODH and the Ohio Hospital Association announced** that 100% of Ohio hospitals have completed Ebola preparedness and response drills.

Oct. 22 **Representatives from ODH, CDC, Ohio Hospital Association and local health departments provided a briefing** to media providing an update of the situation and summarizing the first week's response efforts.

Oct. 21 **ODH evaluated new CDC guidance** for personal protective equipment (PPE) when treating potential cases of Ebola to determine what, if any, additional PPE the Department should acquire to add to its stockpile.

Nearly 100 percent of Ohio hospitals reported completing recommended drills to practice how to manage suspected cases of Ebola and put on and remove PPE.

Oct. 20 **ODH voiced support for new steps by Summit County** to protect first responders and health care workers required to respond to a request for help from someone currently quarantined or monitored for possible Ebola exposure.

The state Controlling Board approved ODH's request to purchase up to \$300,000 in new personal protective equipment and spend up to \$500,000 for any cleanup and disposal of any contaminated linens and other items that may be generated by suspected or confirmed Ebola patients

Oct. 19 **ODH began issuing a daily report** summarizing the number of individuals who have been found to have contact of some type with the Dallas nurse who was in Northeast Ohio, Oct. 10-13.

Oct. 18: **Press conference held** in Akron with Gov. John R. Kasich, Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor and several federal, state and local doctors, health care professionals and elected officials to update the public on the status of Ohio's Ebola response.

Oct. 17: **ODH announced** it is adding to current stockpiles of health care protective equipment for frontline health care workers.

- Oct. 16: **ODH participates** in a media briefing in Summit County with state, local and federal partners.
- State Health Director Rick Hodges notified** Ohio hospitals asking that they conduct a series of training and practice drills within two days to ensure Ohio hospitals are prepared to handle a potential Ebola patient.
- Gov. Kasich talked with President Barack Obama**, thanking him for the CDC support staff, and informing him of Ohio's new, more aggressive quarantine measures. The President is supportive.
- State officials briefed CDC** on Ohio's Ebola response before travelling with the CDC to Summit County to assist with local efforts.
- ODH updated infectious disease experts** in Ohio and issued enhanced quarantine protocols for individuals with possible Ebola exposure.
- Oct. 15: **Gov. Kasich spoke** with U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Burwell and CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden, requesting CDC staff to support regional response efforts. As a result, CDC staff arrived in Ohio overnight.
- The state of Ohio activated** its Emergency Operation Center to manage Ohio's response, and initiated a 24-hour-a-day call center to answer Ohioans' questions about Ebola and the recent events.
- ODH deployed** state epidemiologist Dr. Mary DiOrio and other staff to Summit County to assist Ebola response efforts.
- CDC notified** ODH that Dallas nurse who tested positive for Ebola was in Summit County Oct. 10-13.
- Oct. 14: **State conducted** an Ebola-specific tabletop exercise and preparedness seminar with stakeholders including hospitals, physicians, nurses, EMS responders and local health departments.
- July-Present: **ODH shares Ebola preparedness** guidance with health care providers and local health departments.