

TO: Vermont Healthcare Providers, Hospitals, and Ambulatory Care Centers

FROM: Patsy Kelso PhD, State Epidemiologist for Infectious Disease

Guidance for Ebola Preparedness

Contacting the Vermont Department of Health

If a patient has travel to Guinea, Sierra Leone, or Liberia in the previous 21 days AND has fever or Ebola-compatible symptoms, please call the Health Department. An epidemiologist is available 24/7 at **(802) 863-7240**.

If consultation with either Fletcher Allen Health Care or Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center is warranted, you can reach them 24/7 at the numbers below. Ask for the infectious disease physician on duty.

Fletcher Allen Health Care: **(802) 847-2700**
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center: **(603) 650-5000**

Updated CDC Guidance for Emergency Departments

The CDC has recently updated its algorithm for Emergency Departments when evaluating and managing possible Ebola cases:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/ed-algorithm-management-patients-possible-ebola.pdf>

OCME Guidance for Handling Ebola Remains

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner has developed guidelines for handling human remains of Ebola patients. The guidelines are available on the Health Alert Network at:

[https://portal.han.vermont.gov/DocumentCenter/Documents/Active%20Events/Ebola%20Virus%20Disease%20\(EVD\)/Protocols%20and%20Procedures/2014_10_27_Handling%20Ebola%20Remains%20in%20VT.pdf](https://portal.han.vermont.gov/DocumentCenter/Documents/Active%20Events/Ebola%20Virus%20Disease%20(EVD)/Protocols%20and%20Procedures/2014_10_27_Handling%20Ebola%20Remains%20in%20VT.pdf)

Guidance for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in Vermont

The Office of Public Health Preparedness and EMS has posted guidance and protocols, including information on PPE use at: <http://www.vermontems.org/>

Special note regarding shortages of PPE:

Select PPE based on its ability to protect the worker from splashes of blood, body fluids, or other sources of infectious material. Train workers on when and how to use PPE, including how to put it on (donning), take it off (doffing), and dispose of it. Employers must also comply with provisions of OSHA standards that apply to PPE (e.g., 29 CFR 1910.132) and respirator use (e.g., 29 CFR 1910.134), such as medical exams and fit testing for workers who wear respirators.

The use of surgical hoods, to ensure complete coverage of the head and neck, may require the use of performance based options due to the large demand of these products creating a back log of orders. Use of performance based procedures should continue to follow CDC guidelines leaving the no skin showing recommendation in place. We are currently working with Federal OSHA to determine what if any performance based options may exist.

As of October 31, 2014 for interim PPE until surgical hood supplies are available, OSHA is stating an alternative includes a Tyvek suit with attached hood and either the use of a full face respirator or a N95 with a full face shield to ensure no skin exposure. We are cautioning the medical community to limit the use of tape, and other variations of PPE that would be difficult to remove as this may result in secondary exposure issues during the doffing procedure.

HAN Message Type Definitions

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Info Service Message: Provides general correspondence from VDH, which is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.