



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Vermont Among Nation's Best Prepared to Manage Disease Outbreaks



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BURLINGTON – Vermont is among the nation's best prepared states to manage severe disease outbreaks and contain their spread, according to a new report by the Trust for America's Health and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Vermont was one of only five states to score eight out of 10 on the report: Outbreaks: Protecting Americans from Infectious Diseases, published on Dec. 18. Half of states and Washington, D.C. scored five or lower out of 10 key indicators related to preventing, detecting, diagnosing and responding to outbreaks. Maryland, Massachusetts, Virginia and Tennessee tied with Vermont for the top score.

"Eight is a good score considering the diverse criteria. We are well prepared for emerging threats, for example we are currently actively monitoring several people for Ebola," said Patsy Kelso, state epidemiologist for infectious disease. "We have excellent coordination between local health, epidemiology, public health preparedness, EMS and our hospitals, and we work hard to protect Vermonters."

The report reviewed the core abilities of public health systems to prepare for – and prevent and control the spread of – infectious diseases using containment strategies, investigative capabilities, and drilling and training for hospitals. A state's public health funding, flu vaccination rates, reductions in central line associated bloodstream infections, and the capabilities of public health laboratories during emergencies and drills were also studied.

Major infectious disease threats identified in the report were Ebola, Enterovirus D68 (Ev-D68), acute flaccid myelitis in children, superbugs that are antibiotic resistant, healthcare associated infections and foodborne illness.

To read the full report visit: <http://healthyamericans.org/reports/outbreaks2014/>

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