

TO: Vermont Health Care Providers, Health Care Facilities and EMS Agencies
FROM: Laura Ann Nicolai, Deputy State Epidemiologist

Ebola Update for Health Care Providers

In a Health Advisory on October 31, 2014, the Health Department issued Ebola preparedness guidance for health care settings. The guidance included an Ebola-specific patient advisory sign that could be used to help identify patients with Ebola virus disease. **Use of this sign may now be discontinued.**

Widespread transmission of Ebola in West Africa has been controlled, although additional cases may continue to occur sporadically. The CDC has changed its country classification for Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea to “countries with former widespread transmission and current, established control measures.” As a result, the Health Department has discontinued active monitoring for individuals who have returned from travel to these countries. Travelers from Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone are still recommended to self-monitor for symptoms of Ebola illness for 21 days after departing one of these countries, and the Health Department will continue to respond to any inquiries from these travelers regarding their health.

Although the risk of Ebola has diminished, the epidemiology of emerging infectious conditions is fluid and evolving. Multiple travel-related infectious diseases, including MERS-CoV, Zika virus and measles, remain a threat. Intake staff should routinely ask **all** patients if they have recently traveled abroad.

When caring for individuals with *any* possible travel-related infections:

Take a travel history. Take a thorough and detailed travel history of every patient who presents with signs and symptoms that may be consistent with illness acquired during travel. Collecting travel history information is an important step in ensuring prompt diagnosis and proper treatment.

Use infection control measures. Use your facility’s standard protocols and procedures to implement infection control measures appropriate for the clinical signs and symptoms of each patient. To prevent the transmission of infectious agents, Standard Precautions should be used during the care of **all** patients in health care settings, and Transmission-Based Precautions should be used as indicated. *For CDC's Precautions to Prevent Transmission of Infectious Agents:* www.cdc.gov/hicpac/2007IP/2007ip_part3.html

Report suspect or confirmed reportable diseases – to the Health Department by calling 802-863-7240 or 1-800-640-4374. Epidemiologists are available 24/7 to provide consultation on patients with signs and symptoms of illnesses of public health concern. *For the full list of reportable diseases:* healthvermont.gov/prevent/reporting/documents/reportable_disease.pdf

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.

You have received this message based upon the information contained within our emergency notification data base. If you have a different or additional e-mail address or fax number that you would like us to use please contact your Health Alert Network (HAN) Coordinator at: vthan@vermont.gov or Lee.Dorf@vermont.gov.
