

Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) Information for School Health Clinicians

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Background

The NH Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health Services (NH DPHS) recognizes the need for specific guidance for school health clinicians due to international travel, educational foreign exchange programs and immigration from countries impacted by Ebola Virus Disease (EVD). Because federal guidance is evolving, this document should be considered as interim New Hampshire guidance for school health clinicians.

It is extremely unlikely that school health clinicians will encounter a possible EVD patient in their office. The federal government and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are screening all travelers upon arrival in the United States that are returning from countries affected by the current Ebola outbreak. NH DPHS is also being notified of any such travelers whose end destination is New Hampshire so we can enact daily monitoring procedures in order to quickly identify any persons with early symptoms of possible EVD. Clinical monitoring is provided by NH DPHS, the Manchester Health Department, or the Nashua Health Department, based on the person's residence. If the returned traveler becomes symptomatic, arrangements will be made for them to be evaluated at a hospital and they will be immediately isolated and will not report to work or school. It is important that school health clinicians are aware of current recommendations in order to offer appropriate education and guidance for staff and students, provide assessments in the unlikely event a symptomatic traveler is identified within a school and implement appropriate infection control interventions.

Symptoms of EVD

EVD generally begins with a non-specific febrile illness and includes symptoms such as: fever, malaise, fatigue, weakness, myalgias, loss of appetite, and headaches. Several days after onset of these symptoms a patient may begin to develop abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Unexplained bleeding has not been a prominent symptom displayed during this outbreak. The prominent symptoms of EVD are also seen with many other more common infections, such as influenza, so an appropriate travel history is key to correctly identifying a person with possible EVD.

Transmission of EVD

Ebola Virus Disease is transmitted from human-to-human through direct contact with the blood or body fluids (e.g., urine, saliva, feces, vomit, sweat, breast milk or semen) of a person who is symptomatic with EVD. It is also possible for transmission to occur through contact with objects that have been heavily contaminated with these fluids. The Ebola virus, however, is thought to not survive long periods of time in the environment on dry surfaces that do not have gross body fluid contamination. Ebola is not spread through the air, water or food. Persons are not contagious before they are symptomatic. The incubation period is typically about one week, but can range from 2–21 days.

Recommendations

The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services recommends the following interventions for school health clinicians:

- Maintain a heightened awareness of possible EVD in students, faculty, or other staff who present with symptoms consistent with EVD and who report a recent (within the past 21 days) travel to the countries of

Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia or who have had contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Ebola.

- If a suspect EVD case is identified within your school setting, provide a face mask to the patient to be placed over his/her nose and mouth and instruct the patient to avoid contact with any person.
- Maintain a distance of at least 3 feet from the patient at all times. Avoid direct contact, but keep the patient informed of what is occurring.
- Place the individual in a private room, preferably with a private bathroom if available, and close the door. No special personal protective equipment (PPE) is needed to simply escort a patient to a room and school health clinicians are not expected to have full PPE available to provide ongoing care to a suspect EVD patient.
- Notify the NH DPHS immediately (after rooming the patient) at 603-271-4496 (603-271-5300 after hours) to arrange for further evaluation.
 - If the NH DPHS agrees that the patient is suspect for EVD, NH DPHS will assist with arranging for transport to a hospital emergency department for further evaluation, testing and clinical management with appropriate PPE.
 - If NH DPHS determines that the patient does not warrant further evaluation for EVD, the school health clinician may proceed as per normal patient encounter.
- NH DPHS may ask for more clarification to better triage the patient, which the school health clinician can safely obtain at a distance from the patient (at least 3 feet) without donning full PPE, as long as the patient is not contaminated with body fluids.
- If the patient's body fluids are not contained (e.g., active vomiting, diarrhea or bleeding present), the school health clinician should not enter the isolation room and the door should be kept closed.
- When the suspect case is transported by EMS, the room and bathroom used by the patient should be isolated with doors closed until appropriate decontamination can be arranged. NH DPHS will work with the facility to arrange appropriate decontamination.
- If a suspect case is identified from a phone call to the school, instruct the person to remain where they are and not have further contact with household members or other people. Notify NH DPHS immediately at 603-271-4496 (603-271-5300 after hours).

Additional Information and Resources

- ▶ NH Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services: 603-271-4496
<http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/ebola.htm>
- ▶ CDC Case Definition for Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)
<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/case-definition.html>
- ▶ Resources for Parents, Schools and Pediatric Healthcare Professionals
<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/children/index.html>
- ▶ CDC Ebola information for colleges, universities, and students
<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/advice-for-colleges-universities-and-students-about-ebola-in-west-africa>
- ▶ Health Care Facilities Screening Poster
<http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/ebola/documents/evdscreeing-hospitals.pdf>
- ▶ Preparedness Guidance for Outpatient Healthcare Settings
<http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/ebola/documents/ebola-outpatient.pdf>
- ▶ CDC Ebola information for healthcare workers
www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/index.html
- ▶ CDC Ebola Virus Disease Information for Clinicians in U.S. HealthCare Settings
<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/clinician-information-us-healthcare-settings.html>