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Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) Preparation in New Hampshire: Update #1

Key Points and Recommendations:

1. The New Hampshire Division of Public Health Services (NH DPHS) has updated or released the following new information on our website since the previous HAN message #20141021 (dated 10/21/2014):
 - a. PPE to prevent transmission in hospitals
 - b. PPE and Environmental Infection Control FAQs
 - c. Preparedness guidance for Emergency Medical Services
 - d. Response guidance for Emergency Medical Services
 - e. Outpatient setting guidance
 - f. CDC PPE training videosThese resources can be accessed at:
<http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dphs/cdcs/ebola/clinicians.htm>
2. Plans for Isolation and quarantine of people at risk for EVD are being finalized and will be posted to the NH DPHS website on Monday, November 10, 2014.
3. All healthcare providers should review and adopt of the principles illustrated in the new CDC training videos demonstrating the donning and doffing process for PPE:
<http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dphs/cdcs/ebola/clinicians.htm>
4. All New Hampshire hospitals need to be prepared to identify and isolate a suspect EVD patient, draw and package a blood sample for Ebola testing, and be prepared to manage a suspect EVD patient for up to 24 hours.

Background

The Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) epidemic in the West African countries of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea continues. To date, more than 13,000 cases of confirmed or suspected EVD have been identified with more than 4,800 deaths. Nigeria and Senegal are no longer considered at risk, because there have been no new cases of EVD for more than 42 days since their last case. Mali (neighboring Guinea) has also been confirmed to have their first case of EVD in a traveler from Guinea, but only travelers from the three countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia are considered at risk for EVD unless there is a specific history of contact with a known EVD patient in another country. The CDC has established screening protocols for any passenger arriving to the U.S. from one of these three West African countries, and the NH DPHS is actively involved in the daily monitoring of any of these persons whose ultimate travel destination is New Hampshire.

Healthcare Preparedness

NH DPHS continues to stress that all healthcare facilities and healthcare providers must be prepared to identify patients traveling from the high-risk countries of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea, and recognize the signs and symptoms of EVD in order to correctly triage and isolate patients suspected to have EVD. While it is possible that an EVD patient may present to a New

Hampshire healthcare facility, the risk of any sustained transmission continues to be very low given our preparedness efforts and strong healthcare infrastructure.

While Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon continues to state its willingness to accept Ebola patients from other New Hampshire hospitals who require ongoing care and treatment, all NH hospitals need to be ready to test and initially manage suspect Ebola patients for up to 24 hours. The decision on when and where to transfer a patient with suspect EVD will depend on a number of factors including the clinical condition of the patient, along with the current location of the patient and the hospital's resources and capabilities. Smaller hospitals with more limited resources will not be expected to manage a suspect EVD patient for days, but larger, better equipped hospitals should be prepared to manage a stable suspect Ebola patient for up to 72 hours while waiting for final EVD confirmation testing. The decision on when, where, and how to transfer a suspect or confirmed EVD patient will be determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with NH DPHS. During the time that any acute care hospital is managing a suspect EVD patient, that hospital needs to have the necessary PPE and training for healthcare providers.

Laboratory Testing

All hospitals must have staff prepared and trained to draw blood and package specimens for Ebola testing in accordance with CDC guidelines. Please note that NH DPHS will NOT be sending public health staff to draw and package blood specimens; the hospital facilities need to ensure they have staff trained and prepared to properly package Category A infectious substances for shipment. Training and certification can be performed online at the following sites:

CDC: http://www.cdc.gov/labtraining/course_listing/packing_shipping.html

HighQ, LLC: <http://www.highqllc.com/>

Saf-T-Pak: <http://www.saf-t-pak.com/>

NH DPHS will arrange for a contracted courier to collect the correctly packaged blood specimens for transport directly to the Massachusetts State Laboratory Institute for testing of Ebola virus. Frequently asked questions for specimen testing is available at:

<http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dphs/cdcs/ebola/documents/ebola-lab-faq.pdf>

Blood draws should be minimized and if the patient is stable, the healthcare facility should only draw blood for EVD testing. If the healthcare facility or physician caring for the suspect EVD patient determines that further specimen testing needs to be performed in the main hospital laboratory, the hospital should ensure they have completed a risk assessment for the laboratory procedure(s) ahead of time and are following CDC guidance:

<http://www.aphl.org/aphlprograms/preparedness-and-response/Documents/APHL-Template.pdf>

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/interim-guidance-specimen-collection-submission-patients-suspected-infection-ebola.html>

Additional Information

If you have questions about the New Hampshire's Ebola preparedness, or wish to report a suspect case of Ebola virus disease, please call 603-271-4496 (after hours 603-271-5300).

Further information can be found at:

CDC Ebola Information for Healthcare Workers and Settings

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/index.html>

For any questions regarding the contents of this message, please contact NH DHHS, DPHS, Bureau of Infectious Disease Control at 603-271-4496 (after hours 1-800-852-3345 ext.5300).

To change your contact information in the NH Health Alert Network, contact Denise Krol at 603-271-4596 or email Denise.Krol@dhhs.state.nh.us

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