



November 3, 2014

Re: Updated recommendations for triaging and evaluating patients with possible Ebola virus disease

Dear Colleague,

With the ongoing outbreak of Ebola virus disease (EVD) in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, all healthcare providers and facilities need to be prepared to rapidly identify and safely evaluate patients with possible EVD. Ongoing care of a person who is known or highly suspected to have EVD should be provided at EVD treatment facilities which have special expertise in infection control and the training and equipment necessary to treat these patients safely and effectively. We are working together to identify and prepare Washington State hospitals that could serve in this role.

To ensure our healthcare system is ready to respond to a patient with suspected Ebola virus disease, we urge healthcare providers and facilities to immediately take the following actions:

Prepare

- Assign an infection control expert in your facility (e.g., nurse, infection control practitioner, physician, Medical Director) to have responsibility for preparedness activities.
- Identify and focus training on staff who will interact with potential Ebola patients. Clinics at low risk for seeing an Ebola patient should have at least one physician who is knowledgeable.
- Identify a private room with a bathroom or commode for isolating a suspected patient.
- Identify a space for putting on (donning) and removing (doffing) PPE.
- Assess availability of PPE and other infection control supplies (e.g., hand hygiene supplies).
- Plan for proper disposal of waste.
- Secure CDC recommended cleaning and disinfection supplies.
- Review triage procedures to ensure relevant questions are asked.
- Educate staff on the symptoms and mode of transmission for EVD and triage procedures, including patient placement (see below).
- Conduct drills to practice triage procedures recommended by CDC (see below).
- Post contact information for your local health department in a visible area for staff who might identify these patients:

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1200/LHJ%20Agency%20Directory.pdf>

Train staff on correct use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Train personnel who could interact with possible Ebola patients (e.g., ER and ICU staff) on how to correctly don and doff appropriate PPE. See: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/procedures-for-ppe.html> Small clinics should have at least one person trained who would care for these patients.
- Use the two person “buddy system” to ensure PPE is carefully removed without contaminating one’s skin, mucous membranes, hair or clothing.
 - Use trained observers to monitor for correct PPE use and guide healthcare workers using a checklist for every donning and doffing procedure.
 - If there is potential that respirators will be needed, perform fit testing.
- Practice appropriately donning and doffing PPE using reusable equipment until healthcare provider is proficient.
- Audit performance to ensure appropriate use of PPE.
- Prominently display checklists for donning and doffing in the facility.
- Prepare PPE kits for both the healthcare provider and observer.

Implement protocols to identify and isolate patients with possible Ebola virus disease

- Healthcare providers in emergency rooms should follow the algorithm available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/ed-algorithm-management-patients-possible-ebola.pdf>
- Healthcare providers in ambulatory care facilities should follow the algorithm available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/ambulatory-care-evaluation-of-patients-with-possible-ebola.pdf>

†As of November 3, 2014, countries with widespread transmission include Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone. For up-to-date information on countries with widespread transmission, see: [Ebola Outbreak in West Africa](#).

In order to assist you with your preparedness efforts, our organizations are hosting a training webinar for healthcare workers across the state. The webinar will be offered three times for your scheduling convenience. However, please do not wait to get started on preparedness activities.

Ebola Training Webinars

- Thursday, November 6 | 12:00pm – 1:00pm (Session number: 574 689 783)
- Friday, November 7 | 10:30am – 11:30am (Session number: 578 179 615)
- Tuesday, November 11 | 2:00pm – 3:00pm (Session number: 576 290 897)

Connection information: (registration is not necessary)

1. At the time of the meeting, go to: <http://wsha.webex.com> (Note: there is no “www”.)
2. Go to “Training Center” tab and locate meeting. Follow instructions.
3. Session Password: **healthcare** (all lower case)
4. If not connecting through the web (phone only): Dial 1-877-668-4490 and input the appropriate session number when prompted.

Complete CDC recommendations regarding triaging and evaluating patients with possible Ebola virus disease are available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html>. If you have questions, please contact your [local health jurisdiction](#) or Dr. Marisa D'Angeli (marisa.dangeli@DOH.wa.gov) at the Department of Health.

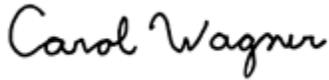
Sincerely,



Kathy Lofy, MD
State Health Officer
Washington State Department of Health



Brian Seppi, MD
President
Washington State Medical Association



Carol Wagner
Senior Vice President for Patient Safety
Washington State Hospital Association



Judy Huntington, MN, RN
Executive Director
Washington State Nurses Association