

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MONROE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

THE THREAT OF EBOLA VIRUS

MONROE, MI – There has been a lot of attention on the issue of the Ebola Virus emerging in the United States in recent weeks. Although there has been no threat of the Ebola Virus in Michigan or specifically Monroe County, the Monroe County Health Department is working daily to ensure the health and safety of Monroe County residents related to this virus. Jerry A. Oley, Chairman of the Monroe County Board of Commissioners commented, “There are emergency response plans in place in the county to address potential health threats as well as an effective Emergency Operations Center that can be activated immediately if concern of a risk occurs in our community.”

Kim Comerzan, Health Officer of the Monroe County Health Department also stated “We have a very close working relationship with the Mercy Memorial Hospital System and are prepared to address infectious disease outbreaks as necessary. Ongoing review and understanding of safe and appropriate personal protective measures for health care workers and others involved in emergency response is key to effective prevention of the disease.”

The first case of Ebola Virus Disease diagnosed in the United States was reported by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on September 28, 2014. The patient recently traveled from Liberia. Most recently, a nurse who treated this patient in a Dallas, TX hospital has been diagnosed with the virus. The mechanism of infection for the second patient is currently being investigated but it is believed that transmission occurred due to a breach of personal protection protocol.

The Ebola virus is spread human-to-human via direct contact with blood or body fluids (including but not limited to urine, saliva, feces, vomit, sweat, breast milk and semen) of an infected person. The virus is NOT spread through air, food or water. The timeframe from disease exposure to onset of symptoms is 2-21 days, however in the current outbreak it is averaging 9-11 days.

Symptoms include: rapid onset of fever (usually over 101.5 F), severe headache, joint and muscle aches, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, or unexplained hemorrhage.

Protection against the Ebola Virus includes the following:

- Diligent hand washing with soap and water or use of a hand sanitizer
- DO NOT touch the blood or body fluids of people who are sick
- DO NOT handle items that may have come in contact with a person who is sick

For information about Ebola Virus or if you are concerned that you may be infected, contact the Monroe County Health Department Communicable Disease Division at 734-240-7832. More information may be found at <http://www.michigan.gov/ebola>

Monroe County, Michigan,

For more information please contact: *Kim Comerzan at 734-240-7804*