

Ebola Virus Outbreak Guidance Documents Continue to be Updated

Attention: Physicians, Emergency Departments, Nurse Practitioners, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Family Health Teams, Infection Control Practitioners, Occupational Health Professionals, NSM LHIN, Central LHIN, County of Simcoe Paramedic Services, Medavie EMS Ontario – Muskoka, Rama Mnjikaning EMS, Midwives

Date: October 17, 2014

As of October 12, 2014 a total of 8997 confirmed, probable, and suspected cases of Ebola virus disease (EVD) have been reported globally, with 4493 deaths. The outbreak is currently centered in the West African countries of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Nigeria and Senegal have not had a probable or confirmed case within the last 42 days.

On September 30, 2014 an imported case of EVD was identified in the United States. The patient passed away on October 8, 2014. Since then, two health care workers (HCWs) at Texas Presbyterian Hospital, who provided care for this patient, have tested positive for the Ebola virus. In addition, on October 6, 2014 World Health Organization (WHO) was informed of the first confirmed case of human-to-human transmission of EVD in Spain. A HCW tested positive for the Ebola virus after treating a patient who had been repatriated from West Africa.

Health professionals are advised to be vigilant for the prompt recognition and reporting of patients with symptoms of EVD from one of the outbreak countries. The Public Health Ontario (PHO) website provides the necessary guidance documents for managing suspected cases of EVD. These documents include: screening recommendations, infection prevention and control measures, initial assessment and management of EVD in multiple healthcare settings and advice for returning travelers from affected countries. Given the evolving epidemiology, it is recommended to visit <http://www.publichealthontario.ca/Ebola> periodically as recent and future updates will be made to the guidance documents. Additionally, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Units Primary Care Portal also provides information on Ebola and other diseases at www.smdhu.org/pcportal.

Although EVD is not transmitted by the airborne route, it may be practical for facilities with airborne infection isolation rooms (AIIR) to isolate suspected EVD patients in an AIIR. This will allow an appropriate space (anteroom) for the putting on and taking off of personal protective equipment (PPE), ensure the presence of a dedicated washroom, and allow aerosol generating medical procedures (AGMP) to be performed, if required. It is preferable that patients not be relocated unless medically required to minimize the risk of transmission. In determining placement, consideration should be given to ensuring that the patient is placed in a room that can accommodate changes in their clinical condition. Person-to-person transmission of Ebola virus is primarily associated with direct contact with blood and body fluids. In order to effectively protect HCWs caring for patients with suspected or confirmed EVD, selection of the range of personal protective equipment (PPE) needs to be based on a site specific risk assessment that includes a review of the care level and tasks anticipated, work and environmental conditions and controls in place. **PHO's most recent (October 14, 2014) Decision Guide on Selection of PPE for EVD for detailed information on selecting appropriate PPE can be found at http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/EVD_PPE_Decision_Guide.pdf.** It is extremely important that the procedures to remove PPE are followed in the recommended sequence as to not accidentally self-contaminate. PHO has provided information on their website on how to safely remove PPE. Some experts have recommended a buddy system where the person removing the PPE is monitored/watched by a secondary person to ensure the correct sequence.

If you suspect a case of Ebola or have questions regarding proper specimen collection, contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit Communicable Disease Team at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 Ext. 8809