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## **Michigan being vigilant against the threat of Ebola**

*State, medical community preparing for any potential risks*

LANSING, Mich – Gov. Rick Snyder today announced that although there is no immediate threat of Ebola in Michigan, the state is vigilantly working with the health and medical community to be prepared to deal with any threat the virus could pose to Michiganders.

Snyder, the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH), the Michigan State Police (MSP), the Michigan Association for Local Public Health (MALPH), and Michigan's other health and hospital professionals want to reassure all Michiganders that the state and its medical community are preparing for, and being vigilant against, any threat the Ebola virus may pose to our state and its citizens.

"Nothing is more important than the health and safety of Michigan families," Snyder said. "Although the Ebola virus has not been detected in Michigan and hopefully will never reach our state, if a case is found I am confident that our health care system and our public health infrastructure are ready to effectively respond."

While the risk of an Ebola outbreak in the United States is very low, emergency response plans are in place and coordination is occurring between the state, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and local healthcare partners to make sure Michigan is prepared for any possible threat. These plans have been developed and are routinely tested in coordination with local health and emergency response partners. As Michigan monitors the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, the state has focused additional efforts on maintaining situational awareness, through continual information sharing and outreach to local health partners.

"Michigan's state public health laboratory, our Office of Public Health Preparedness, and our front line disease epidemiologists in Michigan have been committed to monitoring surveillance and any potential risks of Ebola in Michigan for quite some time now," said MDCH Director Nick Lyon. "With the top experts in the state following the issue so closely, Michigan residents can be assured that our state and local health partners are prepared to quickly and effectively respond to infectious disease issues to protect the health of our communities."

Through the use of Michigan's Health Alert Network which connects public health officials, healthcare systems and professionals, local preparedness healthcare coalitions, and emergency responders

including emergency medical services workers, MDCH has worked to ensure all public health preparedness partners have the information they need to prepare for a case of Ebola being found in Michigan. Further, Michigan hospitals are prepared to follow strict CDC infection control recommendations in the event they need to respond and isolate a patient.

“Michigan hospitals have been working closely with the state in following the Ebola outbreak and preparing to respond in the event of a case being found here,” said Spencer Johnson, president of the Michigan Health & Hospital Association. “Our hospitals and physicians are ready to serve Michigan residents, and for anyone with recent travel to West Africa and who may be showing symptoms, please contact your physician as soon as possible.”

Michigan already has well-established and effective surveillance and communication processes in place and is in constant contact with partners across the state. To prepare for any potential case of Ebola, the state has been:

- Providing weekly communications to partners about updated outbreak guidance materials from the CDC,
- Assessing inventory of the personal protective equipment needed for an Ebola response,
- Responding to calls from healthcare professionals on a daily basis regarding potential infectious diseases including reviewing patient symptoms, case reports, and patient travel.
- Preparing to activate the State Emergency Operations Center in the event a case is found in Michigan and conducting exercises and drills to test preparedness.

“Local public health departments have been in continuous contact with hospital infection control departments and sending up-to-the-minute CDC guidance to all first responders, clinics, physicians, and local elected officials through local health alert systems,” said Meghan Swain, executive director of the Michigan Association for Local Public Health. “There are several joint planning and exercises occurring across the state between local public health, healthcare, and EMS systems to ensure the population is safe.”

Additional steps have been taken to prepare to deal with any potential threat in a swift and effective manner, including:

- Having a state laboratory with the capabilities to complete testing of suspected Ebola cases, greatly increasing the ability to respond quickly and accurately. Michigan is one of 14 states with this capability.
- Detroit Metropolitan Airport has a CDC quarantine station staffed and ready to isolate patients, although there are no direct flights from West Africa to Detroit,
- Michigan has 1,024 isolation beds available across the state, among its 191 hospitals.

"The State of Michigan has existing emergency plans in place to address potential health emergencies," said Col. Kriste Kibbey Etue, state director of emergency management and homeland security and director of the Michigan State Police. "We are engaged with the federal government and proactively working with our state and local emergency management coordinators and health officials to respond in the event of an Ebola outbreak. We are actively monitoring the situation and will act as warranted to ensure the safety of our citizens."

Michigan residents can also be vigilant by understanding what the Ebola virus is:

- The Ebola virus is currently in three West Africa countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Avoiding non-essential travel to those countries is recommended.

- Ebola is *not* spread through casual contact; but through direct contact with the blood or body fluids (including but not limited to feces, saliva, sweat, urine, vomit, and semen) of a person who is already sick with Ebola.
- The virus in blood and body fluids can enter another person's body through broken skin or for example, the eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Symptoms of Ebola include a fever (greater than 101.5°F or 38.6°C) and additional symptoms, such as severe headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, or unexplained bleeding or bruising.
- Residents who have recently returned from West Africa and develop a fever should contact their healthcare provider immediately. If symptoms are present and the patient has traveled from an Ebola-affected country in the last three weeks, the patient should be properly isolated.

Additional information on Ebola and how to prevent it is available on the [CDC's website](#).

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