



October 20, 2014

To Parents, Students, School Employees and Volunteers:

With the news of the Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and of the recent arrival of the disease in the United States, many of you may have question and concerns. At this time there are no confirmed or suspected cases of Ebola in Contra Costa County, or any reported cases in California, and the risk of someone becoming infected in our community remains very low.

As your county public health department, we at Contra Costa Health Services wanted to share the facts about Ebola, and let you know about the proactive steps being taken to keep the community as safe as possible from Ebola and other serious diseases.

Many people are understandably concerned about the possibility of becoming exposed to Ebola through travel, particularly air travel. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has some information regarding this on its website: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/ebola>.

It is important to understand that Ebola can **only** be spread through direct contact with the blood or other body fluids of a sick person. Infected people become contagious when they begin experiencing symptoms, which include fever, vomiting and diarrhea.

Ebola does **not** spread through the air. The only people who are likely to become infected with Ebola are those who are in direct contact with a person who is or was sick at the time of contact. In this case, "direct contact" means that the body fluids of an Ebola patient would need to touch your eyes, nose, mouth, or through broken skin.

Though the risk of an Ebola case appearing in Contra Costa County is low, we must still be prepared and are taking steps to protect our community. All of the county's hospitals and other parts of the healthcare system are working together to ensure that our plans are up to date for safely detecting, isolating and treating Ebola patients to protect the public and contain the disease, should the need arise.



We are in regular communication with the school districts to ensure your schools are informed about the latest developments on this disease.

To learn more about Ebola, or to keep up with local information about the disease, visit www.cchealth.org/ebola. The CDC also maintains current information about Ebola at www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola.

If you have any questions about Ebola, contact your healthcare provider or call the Contra Costa Public Health Communicable Disease Program at 925-313-6740.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "William B. Walker, M.D.", is positioned above the typed name.

William B. Walker, M.D.
Director and Health Officer
Contra Costa Health Services