

UNION COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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News Release

Public Health Ready to Assist Ebola Patients Receive Treatment

August 12, 2014, Monroe, NC – With the latest death toll from the West Africa Ebola virus disease (EVD) epidemic now at more than 1,000, the Union County Division of Public Health is advising anyone who has traveled to the infected areas of West Africa, or destinations where travellers would come in contact with others from affected areas, and show symptoms of EVD upon return, to contact the Division of Public Health immediately at 704-296-4800. A triage nurse will be available to direct those affected with the appropriate course of action.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), EVD is a severe, often fatal illness, with a case fatality rate of up to 90 percent. It is one of the world's most virulent diseases. Symptoms typically include fever, headache, joint and muscle aches, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain and lack of appetite. Some patients may experience a rash, red eyes, hiccups, cough, sore throat, chest pain, difficulty breathing, difficulty swallowing and internal and external bleeding.

The infection is transmitted by direct contact with the blood, body fluids and tissues of infected animals or people. Severely ill patients require intensive supportive care. During an outbreak, those at higher risk of infection are health workers, family members and others in close contact with sick people and deceased patients.

The incubation period of EVD varies from 2 to 21 days. Person-to-person transmission by means of direct contact with infected persons or their body fluids or secretions is considered the principal mode of transmission. In a household study, secondary transmission took place only if direct physical contact occurred. No transmission was reported without this direct contact. Airborne transmission has not been documented during previous EVD outbreaks. There is no risk of transmission during the incubation period and only low risk of transmission in the early phase of symptomatic patients.

In the current outbreak, infected travellers have crossed land borders into neighboring African countries and there is a possibility that other cases might occur in neighboring countries.

Historically, several cases of EVD were diagnosed after long distance travel but none developed the symptoms during the international travel. Long-distance travellers (e.g. between continents) infected in affected areas could arrive while incubating the disease and develop symptoms compatible with EVD after arrival.

For more information please visit the following websites:

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) - <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html>

World Health Organization (WHO) - <http://www.who.int/en/>