



NEWS RELEASE

Public Health

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County, local hospitals prepared for Ebola virus



San Bernardino County's top public health officer told the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday that even though there are no confirmed cases of Ebola in California, the County is prepared to respond to the virus.

"We know how to stop the spread of diseases such as the Ebola virus," said Dr. Maxwell Ohikhuare, Health Officer for the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health. "I can assure you if and when we have Ebola in this county, it will be handled effectively with no danger to the public."

On Sept. 18, a meeting was held with hospitals throughout the county, the Inland Counties Emergency Medical Agency and first responders about the Ebola virus and reviewing the infection control process. Fifty percent of the hospitals in the county are prepared to treat patients with Ebola and the rest are prepared to isolate patients suspected of having the virus, Ohikhuare said.

Ebola is an infectious disease caused by the Ebola virus. Symptoms may appear anywhere from two to 21 days after exposure and include fever, headache, joint and muscle aches, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain and abnormal bleeding. There are no specific treatments but supportive therapy can be provided to address bleeding and other complications. The Centers for Disease Control confirmed the first case of Ebola to be diagnosed in the U.S. on Sept. 30 in a man who traveled to Dallas, Texas from Liberia.

Medical and public health professionals throughout the county are prepared to stop the spread of the virus by isolating ill patients, tracing all who may be exposed to ill patients and further isolation of contacts if they develop symptoms, Ohikhuare said. Medical workers are trained to wear protective gloves, gowns, facemasks and eye protection. They are expected to report any patient suspected of having the Ebola virus to the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health.

The Ebola virus cannot be transmitted through the air, food or water. The virus is transmitted through direct contact with bodily fluids of an infected person with symptoms or through exposure to objects, such as needles, that have been contaminated. People who do not have symptoms are not contagious. People at the highest risk for Ebola are health care workers and family and friends of infected patients.

For additional resources on Ebola visit <http://www.cdc.gov/> or contact the Communicable Disease Section (CDS) at 1-800-722-4794. Continuous health information can be found on the CDS Facebook page at <http://www.facebook/CommunicableDiseaseSection> or on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/SBCOUNTYHS>.

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