COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
**Public Health**

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October 31, 2014

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TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Cynthia A. Harding, M.P.H. Cynthia A. Harding
Interim Director

SUBJECT: **PREPAREDNESS FOR EBOLA IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY (Board Agenda of October 7, 2014; Item 44-A)**

This memorandum is to provide your Board with an update on the progress in implementing measures to ensure Los Angeles County (LAC) is prepared to respond to a case of Ebola virus disease (Ebola) should it occur locally. There are currently no cases of Ebola and no suspect cases in LAC.

The Department of Public Health (DPH) informed your Board about Ebola and the epidemic in West Africa in a memo dated August 20, 2014, and we provided a report with the Department of Health Services (DHS) at the Board meeting on October 14, 2014.

**Background**

The Ebola epidemic in West Africa has continued to accelerate; as of October 27, 2014, about 13,700 cases are reported though this is likely a significant underestimate. The countries with current outbreaks include Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. One travel-associated case of Ebola has been confirmed in Mali. Nigeria and Senegal have had no recent cases and are no longer considered areas of risk.

On September 30, the first case imported to the U.S. was identified in Dallas, Texas. This patient died and two healthcare workers were subsequently identified as infected. Contact tracing and follow-up is ongoing. A second imported case has been confirmed in New York City in a returning healthcare worker who had worked with Ebola patients in Guinea.

**Local Impact**

While there are no cases of Ebola and no suspect cases in LAC, there have been several "Ebola scares" from various settings requiring responder assessment for Ebola risk due to an individual's travel history or illness symptoms. Ebola risk has been ruled out in these cases upon further investigation, i.e., the person had not been in the Ebola outbreak area during the previous 21 days.

**Transmission, Prevention and Treatment**

Ebola is transmitted by direct contact with secretions from an infected and symptomatic person. Ebola transmission is not airborne and does not occur through food or water. Infection can be prevented by avoiding secretion contact (staying at least 3 feet away from a person with Ebola) and by using personal protective equipment (PPE) in healthcare settings. There is no specific treatment or vaccine for Ebola that has been licensed by FDA. Several experimental therapies exist and have been used under compassionate use protocols with U.S. Ebola patients.

**Travel Screening**

Beginning October 8, 2014, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security implemented new traveler screening protocols to screen and monitor travelers who are coming to the U.S. from the three nations in West Africa heavily affected by Ebola (Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea). All of these travelers are required to enter into the U.S. through one of five airports, New York's JFK, Newark, Atlanta, Chicago-O'Hare, and Washington-Dulles international airports. The CDC also required that these travelers continue to be monitored in the U.S. for 21 days following their incoming flights. Information about these travelers is being provided to State and local public health departments. DPH has the responsibility to monitor these travelers locally.

**Quarantine Orders**

This week, the CDC released guidance to state and local public health authorities about issuing quarantine orders for travelers returning from the three Ebola-affected nations. On October 29, 2014, Dr. Ron Chapman, the California State Health Officer, issued a quarantine order and risk-based guidelines for individuals coming into the State from Ebola-affected areas, who have had contact with a confirmed case of Ebola. The State's directive created a standard, statewide protocol for managing those at highest risk of developing and possibly spreading this disease. DPH will comply with CDPH's order within LAC and, should the need arise, the LAC Health Officer will issue the State's quarantine order to an individual who has traveled to LAC from an Ebola-affected area, and has had contact with someone who has a confirmed case of Ebola. The LAC Health Officer will determine the specific requirements of an issued quarantine order on a case-by-case basis using the guidance provided by CDPH and the CDC.

DPH continues to communicate with local agencies that coordinate "on-the-ground" medical support in West Africa, and we will work with them to identify, in advance, any returning individuals to whom this order may apply.

**Los Angeles County Interdepartmental Task Force on Ebola Preparedness and Response**

The County Interdepartmental Task Force on Ebola Preparedness and Response (Task Force) is being jointly convened by DPH and the Chief Executive Office (CEO) Office of Emergency Management (OEM). The Task Force has been meeting weekly to discuss, identify, and evaluate the County's planning and anticipated response. The Task Force is comprised of CEO, OEM, DPH, DHS, DHS Emergency Medical Services, Fire, Sheriff, Coroner, Internal Services, Public Social Services, Mental Health,

Children and Family Services, Community and Senior Services, Animal Care and Control, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Probation, LAC Office of Education (LACOE), LAC Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), and Los Angeles City Emergency Management Division.

The following are key activities the Task Force has participated in since convening:

- A Joint Information Center (JIC) was activated to coordinate and streamline the information being shared with the public.
- The Sheriff's Department disseminated existing protocol to support mutual aid coordination.
- Task Force members developed and disseminated a standardized non-medical screening form on Ebola risk for the non-healthcare community (jails, schools, etc.), for use by responders.
- Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner finalized a protocol document for the In-House Procedure for Handling Ebola Cases.
- Human resource issues were discussed related to Ebola exposure for County personnel;
- Juvenile correctional facilities partners, e.g., Probation Department, DHS, and California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), were involved in discussions around a protocol for incoming inmates who may be at risk for Ebola.
- OEM, DPH, and LACOE held a conference call meeting with LAC school district representatives to coordinate anticipated Ebola response actions in schools. In collaboration with medical directors from LACOE and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), template materials are being developed, including a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document specific for schools.
- A table top exercise on Ebola is scheduled for November 20th with the Task Force.

**Department of Public Health Response Actions**

DPH is continuing preparedness efforts and is using recent experiences from Dallas and New York City to further inform our planning. DPH activated an Incident Command Structure to elevate Ebola preparedness activities and ensure that activities are coordinated and adequately resourced. Ongoing activities focus on improving readiness throughout the healthcare system and among first responders; improving readiness within DPH and other County departments; and conducting outreach to organizations and the public.

**General Information on Ebola**

- The DPH Ebola website landing page was redesigned and launched last week. The new site features audience-specific pages to make it easier to find tailored information. The current audiences include the general public, healthcare providers, emergency responders and the media. Please visit http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/ebola.htm. Additionally, a video message has been posted to DPH's YouTube channel and our website, and may be viewed at: http://youtu.be/mzt5gwrjeLc.
- DPH developed a fact sheet on Ebola that is available on the DPH website in English, Spanish, and French, and has been widely distributed to County staff. DPH is working in partnership with

LAC Registrar-Recorder to get the fact sheet translated into all the threshold languages, which will be available on DPH's website next week. Departments have also been encouraged to print copies of the fact sheet for prominent placement in all public points-of-contact throughout County facilities. Community and Senior Services has shared this fact sheet with the California Association of Area Agencies on Aging, for use statewide.

- DPH has also been working in partnership with 2-1-1 and developed a script for and trained 2-1-1 operators so they can handle calls from the general public regarding Ebola.
- DPH developed several materials to inform the public about Ebola and to address concerns raised by residents and key stakeholders including schools and pet owners.

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**Healthcare and Clinician Outreach**

- Interim Health Officer, Dr. Jeffrey Gunzenhauser, and other DPH leadership held conference calls with the chief executive officers and other senior executives of several hospitals to affirm their readiness to receive patients who may be infected with Ebola and to assess their current and future needs.
- DPH's Acute Communicable Disease Control Program (ACDC) staff continue to work with hospital preparedness staff and infection prevention counterparts to improve planning, healthcare worker training, and other preparedness activities at LAC hospitals through drills and consultation. ACDC staff are following up with LAC hospitals with emergency departments by email and follow-up phone calls to offer DPH's consultative services on infection control for Ebola. Staff have visited 13 hospitals with emergency departments, conducted five hospital table-top exercises on Ebola, and is planning additional drills.
- DPH has released seven Health Alert Network (HAN) alerts on Ebola including preparedness guidance for medical offices and clinics and on the CDC's updated PPE guidance.
- DPH executive clinical staff have recently presented to the Charles Drew Medical Society, the UCLA Center for World Health, the UCLA School of Public Health-Center for Health Sciences, CEOs and Executive Directors of member clinics of the Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County, public health nursing staff at the Department of Children and Family Services Foster Care Program, and the DHS clinic network

**City Outreach**

- OEM and DPH hosted two calls with LAC cities to provide updates on Ebola preparedness efforts and promoted materials on DPH's website for the cities' use. Additionally, CEO provided updates, via email, on Ebola preparedness and public resources directly to the 88 City Managers.
- On October 21, 2014, Dr. Gunzenhauser provided testimony to the Los Angeles City Council on Ebola preparedness activities in conjunction with the City's Emergency Management Department.
- DPH ACDC and Emergency Preparedness and Response Program (EPRP) staff are participating in weekly calls regarding Ebola, coordinated and administered by the Los Angeles City Emergency Management Department (EMD). Los Angeles Police and Fire Departments, Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) Emergency Management, LAWA Airport Police, Port of Los

Angeles emergency management and police, LAUSD emergency management and police, and Los Angeles City Personnel Medical Services were briefed by DPH and planning and protocol needs of the various City agencies were discussed.

- On October 28, 2014 in partnership with LAWA and Congresswoman Maxine Waters' office, DPH participated in a meeting at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) to discuss Ebola readiness and response activities planned at the airport.
- DPH staff participated in a preparedness drill at LAX using an Ebola scenario, held by Los Angeles City Fire Department along with law enforcement and federal authorities.

**Jurisdictional Outreach**

- On October 21, 2014, I participated in a meeting with Governor Brown to discuss LAC's actions as part of the State's Ebola preparedness and response activities. The Governor invited several statewide EMS, Fire Chief and community clinic organizations, along with other local public health directors from Alameda, Orange, and Napa Counties. I discussed information about the County's Task Force, coordination efforts with hospitals and unions, and our public messaging efforts.
- DPH hosted a call with Dr. Ron Chapman, Director of the California Department of Public Health, and several of his executives on October 23, 2014 to discuss Ebola preparedness issues, including PPE, local hospital preparedness, traveler monitoring, and decontamination and waste management.
- Dr. Gunzenhauser participated in a call on Ebola with Southern California Health Officers to discuss regional preparedness issues.
- DPH met with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) management to address concerns about safety in the transportation system. MTA was invited to join the Task Force as key partners in the County's coordinated response.

**Media Outreach**

- DPH held several media availability events in an effort to reach a broad range of local television, print, web, and ethnic media outlets.
- DPH hosted a media roundtable with media managers in collaboration with the Hospital Association of Southern California, Los Angeles City Emergency Management Department, Los Angeles World Airports, and Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management (OEM). Approximately 50 participants attended. The roundtable facilitated discussions on how to frame ongoing news coverage and deal with "Ebola scare" situations.
- Dr. Robert Kim-Farley, Director, DPH Communicable Disease Control and Prevention Division, appeared as a panelist on *Larry King Now* to discuss the County's level of preparedness to respond appropriately to a case of Ebola in LAC.

**Community Outreach**

DPH's Community Health Services (CHS) staff continue to be proactive and responsive to address the increased demand for Ebola training and updates regarding the role of Public Health in disease containment.

- A range of activities are being undertaken to increase preparedness among Emergency Medical Services, Fire, and other first responder organizations. These include development of guidance, presentations, FAQs for first responders, and consultation on various aspects of planning and preparedness response.
- Developed a general LAC-specific sheet addressing frequently asked questions on Ebola and a flyer for community organizations to assist with identifying possible Ebola cases.
- Developed a database of relevant LAC-based social organizations, clinics, missionaries, churches, restaurants, and faith-based organizations more likely to be associated with Ebola-affected countries and individuals.
- Developed a FAQ flyer for faith-based organizations.
- DPH staff distributed Ebola informational packets to various agencies throughout LAC that specifically serve those of West African descent.
- DPH staff continue to provide trainings to local health officials and community stakeholders, including the Beverly Hills Health and Safety Commission, LAC Library Managers at the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs, Los Angeles City Council District Five field staff, and LAC Parks and Recreation Department.

**Staff Training**

DPH CHS and Nursing Administration directors conducted four intensive information sessions on Ebola for front-line CHS staff to: 1) provide updates on the disease and County preparations, 2) clarify staff roles in responding to a suspected Ebola case in LAC, 3) address staff questions and concerns related to contact or quarantine monitoring and types of PPE, and 4) provide training for staff to participate in Speaker's Bureau presentations for the public. There were about 300 participants, with a reported high level of satisfaction with the training and the information provided.

On October 28th and 29th, DPH provided PPE training to more than 60 responders, to update and practice skills incorporating the latest state and federal PPE guidelines for healthcare workers on Ebola. Responders include doctors and public health nurses that may be required to engage in initial assessment of a known or suspect Ebola case as well as staff that may be required to engage in Ebola contact investigation and follow-up. This class will be provided to more than 200 additional responders over the next two weeks.

**SEIU Local 721**

DPH and DHS met with Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 721 to discuss workforce concerns about Ebola, education and training needs, protocols and procedures, PPE, and other issues. Dr. Gunzenhauser also participated in a SEIU-sponsored press conference on Ebola workforce readiness,

along with DHS staff. Dr. Gunzenhauser reiterated DPH's commitment to workforce safety and outlined DPH activities to support hospitals and healthcare workers in preparing for a possible Ebola case in the County.

We will provide you additional updates on the measures DPH and the Task Force are taking to protect the health of LAC residents. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please let me know.

CAH:jb

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Ebola Task Force

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