Utah Department of Health
Utah Department of Workforce Services - Refugee Services Office

EBOLA TALKING POINTS
Drafted: Oct. 16, 2014

NOTE: Any questions beyond what can be answered by the following messages should be directed to the Utah Department of Health (1-888-EPI-UTAH, www.health.utah.gov, or wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/ebola) Do not respond to a question that you do not know the answer to.

General Talking Points

- Utah's hospitals and public health departments are closely monitoring the situation in both Dallas and Western Africa.

- Currently, the risk to the general public of becoming infected with Ebola virus in Utah is very low.

- Ebola is a serious disease because of its high fatality rate and its ability to spread from person-to-person, however, disease transmission requires direct contact with the bodily fluids of somebody who is symptomatic—the disease is not spread through the air.

- In the United States, we have the necessary tools to contain Ebola: strict infection control practices in our hospitals, and public health departments that are capable of mounting a response to contain disease transmission.
    - While individual cases are certainly likely, an outbreak is highly unlikely.

- The CDC is working with a number of federal agencies, airport authorities, public health partners and hospitals to ensure appropriate infection control procedures and public health actions are taken.

Risk Communication Messages

- Ebola is obviously a scary disease, and Utahns may understandably feel anxious about the possibility of themselves or their loved ones contracting the disease.

- At the same time, they should understand there is a huge difference in the health care settings in West Africa and the United States.

- While it's likely that additional individual cases may appear in the United States, Utahns should feel confident in our ability to respond and to contain this disease.

- The CDC and the Department of Homeland Security's Customs & Border Protection (CBP) have begun new layers of entry screening at five United States airports that

receive over 94 percent of travelers from the Ebola- affected nations of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.

- New York's JFK International Airport began the new screening on October 12. The enhanced entry screening at Washington-Dulles, Newark, Chicago-O'Hare, and Atlanta international airports will be implemented next week.

Refugee Community Messages

- All refugees are evaluated prior to travel to the United States. Physicians from Ebola-affected countries have been instructed on what to do in the event that someone shows signs/symptoms of concerns.
    - Usual pre-departure medical checks prior to departure will continue approximately 72 hours prior to travel.
    - Pre-embarkment checks take place immediately before travel, with a focus on Ebola symptoms.

- No refugees are arriving in the United States from any Ebola-affected countries.
    - There may be ONE arrival from Guinea in the coming month. CDC officials will alert the necessary agencies if and when that occurs.

- The CDC is working closely with the International Organization for Migration to track any arrivals in advance and will alert the necessary agencies.