

November 3, 2014

DIRECTIVE:	JOB CORPS INFORMATION NOTICE NO. 14-23
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TO: ALL JOB CORPS NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF
ALL JOB CORPS REGIONAL OFFICE STAFF
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER DIRECTORS
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER OPERATORS
ALL NATIONAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT CONTRACTORS
ALL OUTREACH, ADMISSIONS, AND CTS CONTRACTORS

FROM: LENITA JACOBS-SIMMONS
Acting National Director
Office of Job Corps

SUBJECT: Ebola Virus Information Update

1. **Purpose.** To inform Job Corps students and staff about prevention, recognition and management of Ebola Virus Disease (Ebola), based on the most recent guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).
2. **Background.** The 2014 Ebola epidemic is the largest in history, affecting Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone in West Africa. The epidemic has claimed more than 4,900 lives to date, with an estimated mortality rate of 40 percent to 60 percent with supportive treatment and 90 percent without treatment.

Ebola, previously known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever, is a rare and deadly disease caused by infection with one of the Ebola virus strains. There are five identified Ebola virus strains, four of which are known to cause disease in humans. Ebola viruses are found in several African countries. Ebola was first discovered in 1976 near the Ebola River in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since then, outbreaks have appeared sporadically in Africa.

The natural reservoir of Ebola virus remains unknown; however, researchers believe that the virus is zoonotic (animal-borne), and that certain populations of bats in Africa are the most likely reservoir.

a. **Transmission.**

When an infection occurs in humans, the virus can be spread to others through direct contact (through broken skin or mucous membranes in the eyes, nose or mouth) with:

- Blood or body fluids (including but not limited to urine, saliva, sweat, feces, vomit, breast milk and semen) of a person who is sick with Ebola

- Objects (like clothes, bedding, needles and syringes) that have been contaminated with the Ebola virus

Ebola is not spread through the air, by water, or in general, by food. However, in Africa, Ebola may be spread as a result of handling wild animals hunted for food and contact with infected bats. There is no evidence that mosquitos or other insects can transmit the Ebola virus. Only mammals (for example, humans, bats, monkeys, and apes) have shown the ability to become infected with and spread the Ebola virus.

Most people in the United States are unlikely to encounter the Ebola virus or individuals with Ebola. Ebola's further spread can be stopped through case findings, isolation of ill people, contacting people exposed to the ill person, and further isolation of contacts if they develop symptoms.

During outbreaks of Ebola, the disease can spread quickly within health-care settings (such as a clinics or hospitals). Exposure to Ebola can occur in health-care settings if staff members are not wearing appropriate protective equipment.

b. **Risk of Exposure.**

Health-care providers caring for Ebola patients, and family and friends in close contact with Ebola patients, are at the highest risk of getting sick because they may come in contact with the blood or body fluids, or other objects of sick patients.

Exposure to the Ebola virus or someone with Ebola may be more likely in certain other sectors, including the mortuary/death-care and airline servicing industries. Workers who interact with people, animals, goods, and equipment arriving to the United States from foreign countries with current Ebola outbreaks are at the greatest risk of exposure.

c. **Symptoms.**

Symptoms of Ebola include:

- Fever (subjective or $\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$ or $\geq 38.0^{\circ}\text{C}$)
- Severe headache
- Muscle pain
- Weakness
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Unexplained bleeding or bruising

Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to Ebola, but the average is 8 to 10 days. Recovery from Ebola depends on good supportive clinical care, and the patient's immune response. People who recover from Ebola infection develop antibodies that last for at least 10 years.

3. Action. In the event of a confirmed or suspected case of Ebola on center, centers shall implement emergency response procedures to prevent student and staff exposure during medical emergencies in accordance with Job Corps Policy and Requirements Handbook (PRH) sections 5.20, R3, “Emergency Action Plan” and 5.20, R8, “Bloodborne Pathogens Plan.”

General response to the current Ebola health crisis is as follows:

a. **Vaccination/Medication.**

There is no FDA-approved vaccine or anti-viral medication available to prevent or treat Ebola.

b. **Education.**

Individuals exposed to Ebola are not contagious until symptoms appear.

Job Corps centers are encouraged to share with students and staff the following general tips for controlling the spread of any infections on center:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. Alcohol-based hand cleansers are also effective if hands are not visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Infections may be spread by contact with mucous membranes.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Encourage all students to report to the Health and Wellness Center if they become ill.

c. **Equipment and Supplies.**

- Ensure that center supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) are adequate, and that clinicians and responders have been trained in appropriate use.
- Ensure that clinicians and responders have reviewed CDC and OSHA guidance on worker safety, including the proper sequence of putting on and removing PPE.
- For additional information, visit the Web sites listed below in Resources.

d. **Risk Assessment.**

- Obtain a detailed travel and exposure history:
 1. In the past 21 days, has the patient been to an area with Ebola?

2. In the past 21 days, has the patient been exposed to a person with Ebola, including the body of someone who died from Ebola?

- If yes to either question, isolate the patient immediately.

e. **Testing and Treatment.**

- Any student or staff member suspected of possible Ebola virus infection should be promptly isolated in a room with a closed door until safe transportation to the hospital via emergency medical services can be arranged. Provide sick individuals with surgical masks to reduce the number of droplets expelled into the air by talking, sneezing, or coughing.
- Staff members caring for the possible Ebola patient should wear proper PPE and maintain, at a minimum, standard and contact precautions as described in the center's bloodborne pathogens plan. Minimize contact time with and maximize distance from individuals suspected of having Ebola. Minimize the number of staff members who interact with such an individual.
- In the event of a confirmed case of Ebola on center, a Significant Incident Report must be filed. Students and staff having confirmed contact with the infected individual should be identified and monitored for symptoms, and the center shall contact the local health department to conduct contact tracing and monitoring.

f. **Managing Fears about Ebola.**

In addition to providing medical facts and education on Ebola, it may be helpful to assist students and staff in addressing their fears and anxieties. According to the American Psychological Association, the simple and effective suggestions below can help staff and students maintain positive emotional and physical health while dealing with the serious nature of Ebola and its uncertainty:

- Provide factual information to students and staff on Ebola which highlight the low risk to the general U.S. population.
- Acknowledge and accept feelings related to Ebola and media coverage, but keep in perspective. As education takes place for students and staff, encourage a limit on watching media coverage, and emphasize the importance of not allowing worry to control their lives.
- Focus on positive activities on and off center. This can include exercise, sports, listening to music, video games, attending a spiritual service, and other Healthy Eating and Active Lifestyles (HEALs) activities.
- Maintain social connections with family and friends as an outlet for stress and anxiety.

- If a student or staff member is experiencing extreme feelings of anxiety or stress, he or she should be referred to the Health and Wellness Center for professional assistance. This may be especially important for students and staff with family in countries or cities where Ebola has been identified and there is worry about family members. Identify students and staff members who may be most impacted and offer individualized support.
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Disaster Distress Helpline is a resource that provides 24/7 crisis and counseling support at (800) 985-5990, and is available to address Ebola concerns. Make this information and resource available to students and staff. A printable brochure and wallet card is available at <http://disasterdistress.samhsa.gov/>.

3. Resources. For the most current information on Ebola Virus infection, visit the following CDC and OSHA Web sites:

- Ebola overview: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/>
- Information for health-care workers and settings:
<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/index.html>
<http://www.osha.gov/ebola/>
- Single-page information graphic for posting on center:
“Facts About Ebola in the US”
<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/infographic.pdf>
- Single-page information graphic for center health staff:
“Could it be Ebola? Patient care checklist”
<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/could-it-be-ebola.pdf>

Addressees are to ensure this Information Notice is distributed to all appropriate staff.

5. Expiration Date. Until superseded.

6. Inquiries. Inquiries should be directed to Carol Abnathy at (202) 693-3283 or abnathy.carol@dol.gov; or Johnetta Davis at (202) 693-8010 or davis.johnetta@dol.gov.