

## **Governor Christie Activates Statewide Ebola Preparedness Plan** *Ebola Virus Disease Joint Response Team to Execute Plan and Coordinate in Real Time*

Governor Christie signed Executive Order 164 creating the Ebola Virus Disease Joint Response Team (EVD-JRT) that will direct and coordinate on all matters pertaining to New Jersey's public health response. Christie administration officials, state agencies and departments will work in a coordinated manner to ensure the health and safety of New Jersey residents is protected and to execute on decisions in an efficient and effective manner. The EVD-JRT will also form an advisory panel of additional administration entities, as well as representatives from the medical community.

### **CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE JOINT RESPONSE TEAM**

This multiple-agency team will ensure responses to Ebola issues are in place. Departments include:

- Department of Health
- Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness
- Office of the Attorney General
- Department of Human Services
- New Jersey State Police
- Department of Education

The EVD-JRT will coordinate with federal and state partners, in addition to other state agencies:

- Department of Children and Families
- Department of Environmental Protection
- Department of Transportation
- New Jersey Transit
- Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

### **Newark Liberty International Airport On the Ground Staffing and Coordination of Next Steps:**

- Beginning on October 16<sup>th</sup> an active screening at Newark Liberty International Airport was implemented for passengers who had begun their travel in an affected West African country. OHSP is working with Customs Border Patrol (CBP) to document the number of passengers screened per incoming flight. This screening includes:
  - Temperature checks
  - Visual inspection for symptoms
  - History of risk of exposure
- State officials are currently deployed at Newark Liberty International Airport for real time information and decision making:
  - The Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (OHSP) is leading coordination efforts with Newark Liberty International Airport for passengers identified for enhanced screening.

- The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) is providing legal staff as necessary on site at Newark Liberty International Airport to provide counsel to OHSP and assist, as needed, relative to coordination with our federal partners in undertaking any action by a State agency that may be required, including quarantining.
- Department of Health (DOH) epidemiologists and physicians are in regular communication with the CDC officials at the airport and responding hospitals to collaborate on management of passenger evaluation and follow up protocols.
- If CDC advises DOH of a traveler who is asymptomatic but has some or high risk of exposure, DOH will determine whether that traveler will be subject to State quarantine.
  - At that point, DOH will advise local health officials and OHSP and OAG will coordinate to meet the traveler, serve him/her with the quarantine order and assist.
  - Symptomatic travelers will be immediately transferred to one of three designated New Jersey hospitals under CBP escort.

**Providing Safe Housing and Transportation After Screening At Newark Liberty International Airport:**

- The Department of Human Services (DHS) has made temporary housing arrangements for asymptomatic, at-risk individuals who are non-New Jersey residents, but who are in transit to other domestic destinations upon arrival at Newark Liberty International Airport.
  - Individuals who will be sheltered are those who arrive in Newark from West Africa and who DOH determines, after being evaluated by the CBP and CDC, are to be quarantined.
- DHS has arranged for the transportation of asymptomatic at-risk individuals to either a State temporary housing arrangement or an individual's home, depending on whether the individual is a New Jersey resident or not. DHS is working to coordinate access to language translators for non-English speaking visitors.
  - NJ State Police will provide escorts of transported persons from Newark Liberty International Airport to quarantine locations and security details related to quarantine locations.
  - Individuals who are asymptomatic, but at-risk and live within a 100 mile radius of Newark Liberty International Airport will be transported with an escort to their home.
- The Department of Children and Families (DCF) has prepared guidance for screeners who identify a parent or caregiver exhibiting Ebola symptoms.
  - DCF is identifying resource home caretakers who are willing and able to accommodate children who may require placement in the event a parent or caretaker must be hospitalized or separately quarantined.

**Ensuring New Jersey Hospitals Undergo Training, Drills and Establish Protocols:**

- Governor Christie has designated three hospitals to treat potential patients with Ebola. These hospitals will be supported by the Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Technical Assistance Teams with onsite visits, training and ongoing technical support.
  - University Hospital in Newark
  - Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick
  - Hackensack University Medical Center in Hackensack
- DOH directed the CEOs of New Jersey's hospitals overseeing all acute care hospitals to conduct drills to test Emergency Department processes for promptly identifying and isolating suspected Ebola patients.

These hospitals completed their drills prior to October 17.

- NJ hospital systems have been tested with over a dozen “false alarms” that have occurred with individuals presenting to hospitals with symptoms or travel history.
  - NJ Hospital Association (NJHA) is surveying all hospitals conducting these drills and collecting data that is being shared with DOH in order to prioritize additional training needs.
  - The Rutgers University School of Public Health is training key health educators statewide about the prevention of occupational exposure to the Ebola virus.
  - Commissioner Mary O’Dowd has held briefing calls for 738 hospital officials, county and local health department and EMS leaders.
- DOH is coordinating with local health departments to assess readiness for management of suspected Ebola cases, including establishing protocols around local isolation and quarantine of individuals as well as the disposal and transportation of regulated medical waste.
  - DOH is working with the CDC to prepare New Jersey state lab to test Ebola samples. In preparation, NJSP Hazardous Materials Unit has developed protocols with the DOH for the handling and delivery of blood samples. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is working with contractors to establish a removal and disposal protocol for infected debris and waste handling.

**Ensuring Emergency Responders, Hospital and Healthcare Workers Are Appropriately Trained and Equipped:**

- DOH issued guidance to 911 dispatch centers to ensure individuals who exhibit signs/symptoms of possible Ebola are screened to protect first responders. First responders have received updated guidance and will have access to the Rutgers education sessions for additional opportunities.
- NJ State Police has refreshed existing stocks of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) carried in trooper vehicles and are training troopers on protocols for dealing with potentially exposed individuals.
- The Department of Health ordered nearly \$1 million in Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for use by hospitals and health care workers and the state has pre-positioned its existing stockpile of PPE to be at the ready if needed.
- All Port Authority Police Department (PAPD) officers assigned to the Port have undergone blood borne pathogen training and have been issued reinforced Tyvek suits.

**Activating Safeguards to Protect Health of New Jersey Commuters:**

- NJ TRANSIT employees are trained in incident response, management of blood borne pathogens including Ebola and the management of hazardous materials in compliance with federal and state guidelines.
- NJ TRANSIT formed an internal task force that includes staff from its Medical, Office of Emergency Management, Environmental, Safety, Communications departments and all of the operating lines.
- Open lines of communications have been established with major transit agencies across the country as well as local public health and safety organizations.
- All members of the NJ TRANSIT Police Department are equipped with personal protective gear and are trained in emergency and hazmat response.

**Creating Protocols and Training for New Jersey Schools and Universities:**

- Department of Education (DOE) is hosting a webinar for school nurses reviewing the signs and symptoms of Ebola, management of symptomatic individuals and coordination with local and state officials regarding symptomatic individuals.
- DOE is including updates on Ebola as part of their weekly broadcasts with all chief school administrators

and superintendents.

- DOE is putting in place emergency preparedness guidelines should there be a need to close schools or quarantine groups of students if there are symptomatic individuals.

**Triggering Statewide, Continuous Communications Network:**

- DOH has been providing ongoing updates and guidance to local health officials related to public education, symptom monitoring and the role and responsibilities of public health officials.
- OHSP is coordinating the development of a State Ebola Response Plan which will be an annex to the State Emergency Operations Plan and State Pandemic Response Plan.
- Messages from the Regional Operations Intelligence Center (ROIC) are being sent to law enforcement partners on "Ebola Situational Awareness and Recommendations."
- Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and the ROIC have established notification protocols for state executive leadership upon learning of a suspected Ebola case at Newark Liberty International Airport.
- NJ State Police has developed protocols with Customs and Border Patrol to share information on incoming flights.
- Port Authority is working with Customs and Border Protection and the U.S. Coast Guard who have implemented measures to monitor the arrival of vessels who either have crew members from West African countries or have visited ports in West African countries.
- To support Liberian Communities in New Jersey, DOH has distributed information to help educate friends and families returning from West Africa and have attended community meetings with concerned community-based organizations throughout the state.