

To: All Georgia State Employees

Subject: Ebola Virus

Date: October 15, 2014

The 2014 Ebola epidemic is affecting several countries in West Africa, principally the nations of **Liberia**, **Sierra Leone**, and **Guinea**. The risk of an Ebola epidemic in the United States is extremely remote. However, many of you may have concerns and questions, especially those of you with friends or family in West Africa.

Unlike colds or the flu, the Ebola virus does not spread easily. Ebola is not spread through air, water, or food. The virus takes anywhere from two to 21 days to "incubate" and develop into Ebola disease. Even if a person is infected with Ebola, they cannot spread it to others until they show symptoms of disease. Anyone experiencing the following symptoms along with travel to affected areas of West Africa within the last three weeks, should be isolated and medically evaluated:

- Fever including low grade
- Severe headache
- Muscle pain
- Weakness
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Unexplained, unusual bleeding or bruising

The Ebola virus is spread through direct contact with blood or bodily fluids (urine, feces, saliva, vomit, sweat, semen, breast milk) of someone who is sick with Ebola. This can also happen by contact with objects that have been contaminated with blood or bodily fluids of an infected person (e.g., needles or bed linens).

There is no vaccine for Ebola and experimental treatments are still in development. However, there are a few simple things you can do to protect yourself and limit your risk of getting sick from Ebola or any other virus, such as the flu:

- Wash your hands often and thoroughly. Hand washing may seem simplistic, but it has been proven to be one of the best protections against disease.
- Avoid touching your nose, eyes and mouth. Bodily fluids from an infected person can enter through mucous membranes, or through broken skin (e.g., a cut or abrasion).
- Do not touch or handle things that may have come in contact with a sick person's blood or bodily fluids, like clothes, bedding, needles or other medical equipment.
- Do not touch the body of someone who has died of Ebola.

Please refer to the webpages below for current information related to the Ebola outbreak and for infection prevention tips and flyers related to hand hygiene, cough and sneeze etiquette, and other tips to limit the spread of infection.

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html>

<http://dph.georgia.gov/infection-prevention-tips-staying-healthy>

<http://www.dph.ga.gov/ebola>