

Communicable Disease Advisory:**Travel Related Illness Update**

From the office of the Central Zone Medical Officer of Health

Date: January 27, 2016

Context:

On January 14, 2016, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that the most recent cluster of Ebola virus disease (EVD) in Liberia was controlled. This marks the end of the chain of transmission of EVD in West Africa, which affected Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. While this is a significant achievement in the control of Ebola, these countries continue to be at high risk of sporadic cases and potentially small outbreaks in the future. Sporadic cases of EVD, and other hemorrhagic fevers, may also occur in other countries such as Uganda, Congo and Nigeria. Surveillance and prevention activities by the WHO are on-going. However, due to the change in epidemiology of EVD, travelers arriving to Alberta from Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, will no longer be required to report to, or be followed by, the local Medical Officer of Health.

In addition to Ebola, new pathogens continue to emerge and circulate globally such as the coronavirus associated with Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome and new avian influenza strains in China. Also intermittent outbreaks of diseases such as measles continue to occur in various countries. We appreciate the actions taken by health care professionals in response to the threat of EVD and ask that physicians and other health care workers remain vigilant about the risk of all travel-related illnesses in patients presenting with infectious symptoms and a significant travel history. Updated information about Travel Health and country-specific risks can be accessed from the Public Health Agency of Canada at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv/index-eng.php>.

Actions:

- 1) Travel history remains important in all people presenting for health care. Please continue to ask about recent travel, fever and other infectious symptoms at triage.
- 2) Patients should be triaged and managed as appropriate for their symptoms using routine Infection Prevention & Control (IPC) strategies.
- 3) Fever in travelers from Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia should be investigated similarly to other travelers from Africa. If EVD is suspected based on symptoms, this must be reported immediately to the on-call Zone MOH at 403-356-6430 as per established processes.
- 4) If EVD, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV), or novel influenza is suspected in a patient with a relevant travel history, the patient should be immediately put in a single room with contact and droplet precautions and the MOH and IPC should be notified

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Additional References:

World Health Organization Ebola Information <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/en/>
Medical Officer of Health Bulletins <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/medstaff/Page7082.aspx>
AHS Ebola Information <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page12575.aspx>