



Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent of Schools



Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D.  
Secretary

Date: October 23, 2014

To: Superintendents of Schools

From: *Lillian M. Lowery*  
Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D. and Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D. *Joshua M. Sharfstein*

Re: Ebola Virus Disease Resources for Schools

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The purpose of this memo is to provide you with information and guidance related to the Ebola virus. Ebola virus is a severe, often fatal, viral disease in humans, and is the cause of ongoing outbreaks in several West African countries (currently Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone). Although there were recently cases of Ebola virus disease identified in the United States, there have been no cases of Ebola diagnosed in Maryland and **the general risk of acquiring Ebola in Maryland continues to be extremely low.**

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) is in frequent communication with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and regularly provides guidance to Maryland hospitals and health care providers about a range of infectious diseases, including Ebola virus disease. DHMH is also working with the Maryland State Department of Education and local school officials to communicate information to families and staff.

As we continue to monitor the changing Ebola virus disease situation, it is important for Maryland schools to be prepared to respond to questions related to Ebola virus disease. Schools play an important role in maintaining the health and well-being of students. In addition, schools and school health services program staff fulfill a critical role in monitoring the health status of students and staff with recent travel or immigration from Ebola affected areas.

Currently, the State response efforts are focused on:

1. Dissemination of accurate information to both students and their families;
2. Early recognition and isolation of students and staff who have recently traveled to affected areas and develop symptoms;
3. Immediate notification and consultation with public health authorities of student and staff identified as having recently traveled and have symptoms to better ensure the appropriate actions are taken to protect public health.

To implement the actions above, we are providing you with: 1) a sample letter to inform parents of recommendations to prevent spread of communicable diseases in school; 2) information for staff who have recently traveled to affected areas; 3) instructions on how to respond to illness in a student with recent travel to an Ebola affected area.

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Thank you for the invaluable role you, your schools' nurses, administrators and other school personnel play in maintaining the health of our communities. If you have any questions you may contact Alicia Mezu, Health Services Specialist, Division of Student, Family, and School Support, MSDE at [alicia.mezu@maryland.gov](mailto:alicia.mezu@maryland.gov) or 410-767-0353 or Cheryl De Pinto, Medical Director, Health Systems and Infrastructure Administration, DHMH at [cheryl.depinto@maryland.gov](mailto:cheryl.depinto@maryland.gov) or 410-767-5595.

LML:JMS

Enclosures (5)

c:     Local Health Officers  
       School Health Services Coordinators  
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       Sherry Adams