



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**This is an official  
MS Health Alert Network (HAN) Advisory**

**MESSAGE ID:** MSHAN-20180606-00138-ADV (Health Advisory)  
**RECIPIENTS:** All Physicians, Hospitals, ERs, ICPs, NPs, and  
Healthcare Providers - Statewide  
**DATE:** Wednesday, June 06, 2018  
**SUBJECT:** Ebola Outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo

**Key Messages:**

- MSDH is monitoring an ongoing outbreak of Ebola virus disease in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- Risk of EVD in Mississippi remains low.
- Many diseases uncommon in the US can be seen in travelers.
- MSDH recommends obtaining a travel history in all patients with acute and potentially infectious disease.
- **Notify MSDH of patients with a specific history of travel to the Democratic Republic of Congo and symptoms consistent with EVD.**

Dear Colleagues,

The Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) is closely monitoring the ongoing outbreak of Ebola virus disease (EVD) in the Democratic Republic of Congo. As of June 3, 56 Ebola cases have been reported by the DRC to the World Health Organization (WHO). This number includes 37 confirmed, 13 probable, and 6 suspected cases. So far 25 deaths have been reported. Currently, there are no travel restrictions to DRC, though the CDC has issued a travel watch (<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/watch/ebola-democratic-republic-of-the-congo>) reminding travelers to practice precautions to prevent illness. **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicates that the risk of EVD in travelers to DRC is low. Additionally, the risk of importation of EVD to Mississippi is very low.**

The majority of cases in the DRC have occurred in remote rural areas; however at least one case has been confirmed in Mbandaka, a city with over 1 million people. The confirmed case in Mbandaka, a large urban center located on a major national and international river, with road and air transportation, increases the risk both of local propagation and further spread within DRC and to neighboring countries. The DRC Ministry of Health is working with WHO to put in place measures to prevent further transmission, including the use of Ebola vaccine. At this time the risk is currently considered low at a global level.



EVD is a rare but severe and often deadly disease. Symptoms include fever, diarrhea, vomiting, severe headache, muscle pain, abdominal pain, and unexplained bleeding or bruising. EVD is spread by direct contact with infectious blood or body fluids, and symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after contact with the virus, with an average of 8 to 10 days. Patients with other illnesses (e.g., influenza, malaria, typhoid fever) may present with similar symptoms.

**While the risk of individuals with travel-associated EVD presenting in a hospital or ambulatory care setting in Mississippi is exceedingly low, MSDH is taking this opportunity to make the following recommendations:**

- Obtain a travel history on any patient with an acute potentially infectious disease (international travel should include any country). Many diseases that are uncommon in the US are seen more frequently in other countries, and cases of emerging or re-emerging infectious diseases associated with exposure in other countries do occur, including measles, Zika, malaria, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and EVD, among others;
- Review your facility's infection control procedures and be prepared to institute EVD specific precautions as the need arises (see resources below);
- If there is a suspicion of EVD based on clinical presentation AND recent travel to the Democratic Republic of Congo, the patient should be immediately isolated in a private room with an in-room bathroom or covered bedside commode, and use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE);
- **If a patient with recent travel (within 21 days) to the Democratic Republic of Congo AND symptoms consistent with Ebola Virus Disease is identified**, providers are asked to immediately notify the MSDH Office of Epidemiology at 601-576-7725 (601-576-7400 after hours, weekends and holidays).
- Please contact the MSDH Office of Epidemiology during regular business hours with any non-urgent questions regarding EVD.

For more information on EVD, please refer to the following:

- WHO: <http://www.who.int/ebola/situation-reports/drc-2018/en/>
- CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html> and <https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/clinicians/index.html>

Regards,

Paul Byers  
State Epidemiologist



***Alerting Message Specification Settings***

**Originating Agency:** Mississippi State Department of Health  
**Alerting Program:** MS Health Alert Network (MS HAN)  
**Message Identifier:** MSHAN-20180606-00138-ADV  
**Program (HAN) Type:** Health Advisory  
**Status (Type):** Actual ()  
**Message Type:** Alert  
**Reference:** MSHAN-00138  
**Severity:** Unknown  
**Acknowledgement:** No  
**Sensitive:** Not Sensitive  
**Message Expiration:** Undetermined  
**Urgency:** Undetermined  
**Delivery Time:** 600 minutes

**Definition of Alerting Vocabulary and Message Specification Settings**

**Originating Agency:** A unique identifier for the agency originating the alert.

**Alerting Program:** The program sending the alert or engaging in alerts and communications using PHIN Communication and Alerting (PCA) as a vehicle for their delivery.

**Message Identifier:** A unique alert identifier that is generated upon alert activation (MSHAN-yyymmdd-hhmm-TTT (**ALT=Health Alert**, **ADV=Health Advisory**, **UPD=Health Update**, **MSG/INFO=Message/Info Service**)).

**Program (HAN) Type:** Categories of Health Alert Messages.

**Health Alert:** Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

**Health Info Service:** Provides Message / Notification of general public health information; unlikely to require immediate action.

**Status (Type):**

- Actual: Communication or alert refers to a live event
- Exercise: Designated recipients must respond to the communication or alert
- Test: Communication or alert is related to a technical, system test and should be disregarded



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**Message Type:**

Alert: Indicates an original Alert  
Update: Indicates prior alert has been Updated and/or superseded  
Cancel: Indicates prior alert has been cancelled  
Error: Indicates prior alert has been retracted

**Reference:** For a communication or alert with a Message Type of “Update” or “Cancel”, this attribute contains the unique Message Identifier of the original communication or alert being updated or cancelled. “n/a” = Not Applicable.

**Severity:**

Extreme: Extraordinary threat to life or property  
Severe: Significant threat to life or property  
Moderate: Possible threat to life or property  
Minor: Minimal threat to life or property  
Unknown: Unknown threat to life or property

**Acknowledgement:** Indicates whether an acknowledgement on the part of the recipient is required to confirm that the alert was received, and the timeframe in which a response is required (Yes or No).

**Sensitive:**

Sensitive: Indicates the alert contains sensitive content  
Not Sensitive: Indicates non-sensitive content

**Message Expiration:** Undetermined.

**Urgency:** Undetermined. Responsive action should be taken immediately.

**Delivery Time:** Indicates the timeframe for delivery of the alert (15, 60, 1440, 4320 minutes (.25, 1, 24, 72 hours)).