

October 24, 2014

Dear Parents and Families,

On Thursday, a physician residing in Manhattan who had recently worked with patients in Guinea developed a fever. EMS was contacted and the doctor was taken to Bellevue Hospital, where a diagnosis of Ebola was confirmed. This is the first case of Ebola in New York City.

The New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOH) are working together to ensure that families have the most up-to-date guidance about Ebola. The facts below are important to help you understand how low you and your child's risk of Ebola exposure is:

- Ebola can be spread only by direct contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person. It is not spread through the air or simply by being near someone who is infected.
- People only become contagious after they begin to have symptoms, such as fever.
- The Ebola outbreak is concentrated in only three countries – Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone.
- If someone has traveled to Liberia, Guinea, or Sierra Leone in the past 21 days but does not have any symptoms, he or she cannot infect anyone else with Ebola.
- If you or your child has traveled to one of these three countries in the past 21 days and has any early Ebola symptoms – including fever, headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain, or lack of appetite – an adult should call 911 immediately, identifying the affected individual's symptoms and travel history. Health care will be provided across the City with no questions asked about immigration status and regardless of ability to pay. Do not send your child to school until medical attention has been received.

New York City is collaborating closely with its state and federal partners to protect New York children and families. The risk of infection in New York is extremely small, and we hope this information will ease any concerns that you might have:

- All NYCDOE school nurses and medical providers in New York City have been prepared by the Health Department to look for signs of Ebola and take immediate steps to isolate those who may be infected and transfer them to a hospital for evaluation.
- Since August, the DOE has been providing weekly Ebola updates to all principals.
- All school principals were provided a guidance document that can be found at schools.nyc.gov
- In partnership with the DOE, the DOH is providing training for central staff who can answer questions as they arise.

The DOE and DOH are committed to keeping families informed about the latest information related to Ebola. Please visit the www.nyc.gov/health or talk to your school nurse for accurate updates about Ebola.

Thank you,



Carmen Fariña
Chancellor
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Dr. Mary T. Bassett
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