



MEMORANDUM

Date: November 12, 2014

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator 

Re: **Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) Situational Update**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on the activities the Pima County Health Department (PCHD) has undertaken in collaboration with many partners across Pima County in response to and preparation for the threat posed by the Ebola virus to this jurisdiction.

Working Group Activities

The Working Groups that were formed during our kick-off planning meeting on 16 October are meeting regularly in an effort to develop a deeper understanding of the evolving threat, as well as to create uniform coordinated approaches for response.

1. Emergency Management Work Group. This group has had two all-partner meetings with approximately 40 participants each, along with multiple meetings of smaller subcommittees. The Utilities Subcommittee has developed strategies to share information with utility providers. Representatives of the utilities are also evaluating federal wastewater guidance to determine local infection control procedures and potential impact. Another subgroup focused on evaluation of plans for feeding and sheltering those under quarantine has reached out to behavioral health services to begin community recovery planning and has identified potential vendors for local waste disposal. Review of vendor's licensure for medical waste transport is underway.

The mass transportation subcommittee is developing procedures for infection control and identification of ill travelers. The team has also identified procedures for redundant and secure transport of laboratory samples to the Arizona State Lab for testing. Finally, animal care representatives have reviewed standard operating procedures on animal exposures, quarantine, and required personal protection equipment for domestic animal response.

2. First Responder and Public Safety Work Group. This group has had two all-partner meetings with approximately 50 participants each and multiple subcommittee teams have also convened meetings. The Work Group has drafted unified protocols for emergency medical service (EMS) and law enforcement response and 911 communications that would

be used across jurisdictions in Pima County. The Work Group is also developing policies and protocols for training and personal protective equipment needs for both EMS and law enforcement personnel and has identified for further discussion the need to regionalize the hospital and EMS response. This Work Group has also evaluated waste disposal protocols and has partnered with healthcare organizations and their vendors to dispose of waste after patient transport.

3. *Schools and Public Institutions Work Group.* This group has had two all-partner meetings with approximately 20 participants at each. EVD information provided by the PCHD, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Arizona Department of Health Services has been synthesized into a draft guidance document for local school, childcare and public settings. The group has also developed and shared an "Ebola 101" presentation with schools, childcare facilities, libraries and faith-based organizations. PCHD public health nursing and clinical services staff have been trained to facilitate group meetings and presentations as part of the presentation.

4. *Hospital and Ambulatory Care Work Group.* This group met on October 27 at the Abrams Public Health Center with approximately 25 participants. The meeting included members from all major hospitals, as well as ambulatory care entities. They are actively sharing guidelines, plans and procedures with the goal of developing model protocols that can be adapted by individual clinical provider entities. Areas to highlight include development of universal screening and evaluation guidance; notification procedures for local health department reporting; education and training for EVD symptoms and risk factors, including travel; infection prevention and patient isolation; coordination of transport to higher levels of care; and specimen collection coordination with the Arizona State Lab.

5. *Public Information Work Group.* Pima County Communications identified 37 communications professionals to participate in this process. An initial planning meeting was held in the Board of Supervisors hearing room with almost 40 attendees from the major entities identified above. The session began with an introduction to the facility as the County's designated Joint Information Center.

Attendees self-selected into four strategy-based groups; media relations, pre-event prepared messaging, communications systems for public information officers, and public awareness. Each of the groups identified possible outcomes and strategic issues that needed to be addressed as a group. Post-event planning has centered on identifying group leaders and eliciting Pima County's Information Technology Department in the identification and design of a collaborative tool or system that is institutionally agnostic. The next steps are to implement that tool and engage the group members and others in the solutions to the challenges identified by each of the four major strategic groups.

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Governor's Council on Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response

Appointed by Governor Jan Brewer, Pima County's Health Director, Dr. Francisco Garcia, has participated in three meetings as a member of the Governor's Council on Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response. This Council is tasked with developing a coordinated and comprehensive plan to ensure the state is prepared to manage and respond to potential outbreaks of infectious diseases, including EVD, in Arizona. Dr. Garcia serves as Co-chair of the Health Care System Subcommittee, which is tasked with identifying regional hospital and EMS partners that would be called upon if an EVD case were to be identified in Arizona.

Active Monitoring in Pima County

In late October, the CDC began providing states with a daily listing of people arriving from Ebola affected countries. We are notified of travelers that have visited Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone and who are returning to Pima County. These individuals have been screened at the five designated arrival airports and are being categorized by risk of exposure. These individuals are provided active monitoring, which includes an initial health screening where vitals are taken and self-reporting of temperature and any symptoms twice daily and check-in with the local health authority for a 21-day observation period. The goal of this monitoring is to ensure rapid identification of symptoms and to create a mechanism for constant contact with these individuals.

On October 24, Dr. Garcia was notified of one such individual who had been deemed low risk by the CDC. The individual was contacted immediately. Dr. Garcia and his staff confirmed the low-risk status of the individual, ascertained the intended nature of activities to be undertaken while in Pima County, and developed a schedule for regular communication with the individual. Staff ensured the individual was aware of the appropriate mechanisms for contacting the Health Department in the event of illness and established an expectation for in-person nursing assessments to be conducted at least once per week. Additionally, Health Department professional staff communicated with the potential receiving hospital and EMS unit that would respond to a call from that residence. The individual in question was very cooperative with our efforts to provide monitoring and support, as were all our community partners. This person left our jurisdiction on November 7, 2014.

Summary

Dr. Garcia continues to believe the public health threat posed by EVD to Pima County is very low. We continue, however, to follow closely the evolving international and domestic

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situation and are in near daily contact with representatives of the CDC and the ADHS in order to anticipate future challenges. While our greatest vulnerability may come from returning individuals involved in healthcare and missionary activities in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea, these individuals are being effectively identified by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and CDC, and their identities are being disclosed to identified personnel, such as Dr. Garcia, within local health departments. Currently, the PCHD has the capacity to provide these returning travelers with the active monitoring and humane support they need to ensure their own well-being, as well as to protect the health of the County.

CHH/mjk

c: Jan Leshar, Deputy County Administrator for Medical and Health Services
Dr. Francisco Garcia, Director, Health Department
Mike Hein, Director, Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security
Jeff Nordensson, Director, Communications Department