

REMINDER: IDENTIFY, ISOLATE AND INFORM

Background

On August 1, 2018, the Ministry of Health (MoH) of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) confirmed an outbreak of Ebola virus disease (EVD) in the province of North Kivu, in eastern DRC; cases have subsequently been reported in the adjacent province of Ituri. Almost a year later, this Ebola outbreak continues to grow and has proven challenging to control due to the political landscape and ongoing violence in this region of DRC. In June, some limited spread of EVD occurred across the border into neighboring Uganda--three imported cases in a single family (all fatal) were identified, but fortunately, no secondary transmission occurred. As of July 9, DRC has reported 2,437 total EVD cases with 1,641 deaths.

The possibility of EVD being introduced into Georgia by an ill traveler from the affected region and then spread to others in Georgia is considered very low. However, experience has shown the importance of being prepared for such a possibility. The purpose of this notice is to remind healthcare providers about actions to take here in Georgia when evaluating patients for possible EVD (or other serious communicable diseases!).

Recommendations

- Early recognition is critical to controlling the spread of Ebola virus. Healthcare personnel should ask about patients' travel histories and consider the possibility of EVD in patients who present with fever and severe headache, fatigue, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, or unexplained bleeding (e.g., bleeding gums, nose bleeds).
- Healthcare providers should continue to check the Travel Clinical Assistant for up to date information on current travel-related diseases: <https://dph.georgia.gov/TravelClinicalAssistant>
- Should the patient report a history of recent travel to one of the outbreak areas in DRC and have consistent symptoms, healthcare providers should immediately call 1-866-PUB-HLTH (1-866-782-4584) and ASK SPECIFICALLY to SPEAK WITH a DPH Medical Epidemiologist for consultation. The Med Epi will conduct a risk assessment and facilitate next steps as appropriate, for example, engaging the Infectious Disease Network (IDN).

Thank you,
Jessica

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