

To: RIT Community

From: Jeremy Haefner, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Sandra Johnson, Senior Vice President for Student Affairs

Subject: Update - Monitoring of the Ebola Outbreak

Oct. 22, 2014

RIT officials continue to monitor the Ebola virus disease outbreaks that are centered in parts of West Africa.

At the present time, the Ebola outbreak has been limited to a specific geographic area in West Africa with a handful of cases arising in the United States. We believe the risk to the RIT community remains very low because we have curtailed any business travel to the affected countries and we have an evaluation process in place for incoming students. Nevertheless, we are taking precautionary outreach measures to communicate with members of our community and provide the latest information and available resources. University officials, including the RIT [Student Health Center](#), are carefully monitoring the situation and are prepared to take further action, if it is deemed necessary.

Dr. Brooke Durland, executive director of the Student Health Center, and her staff are working closely with offices across the university, the Monroe County Health Department and the New York State Department of Health.

In the event of an outbreak in the Rochester region, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has taken a number of steps to assure New Yorkers that proactive steps are being taken to protect health and safety. This includes the designation of Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester as one of eight statewide hubs that will be prepared to manage an outbreak.

In terms of travel, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is urging all U.S. residents to avoid nonessential travel (Level 3) to Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia. A precaution on travel (Level 2) is in place for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Please see CDC travel recommendations here: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>. RIT faculty and staff must obtain advance approval from their division vice president before making travel arrangements for university business to these locations. No university or sponsor funds may be used, or sponsorship provided, in support of travel to West Africa without prior approval.

President Obama recently reiterated that, while Ebola is a serious disease, Americans need to understand the facts and be guided by the science: “Ebola is not easily transmitted. And we know how to fight it. ”Ebola is very difficult to contract and is spread only by close contact with the bodily fluids of a very sick person. It is not airborne or spread by coughing, sneezing, or sharing food.

For the most updated information about the Ebola outbreak, we encourage you to review the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website:http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html?s_cid=cdc_homepage_feature_001

Finally, it is early in the influenza season. According to the CDC, tens of thousands of Americans die from the flu each year. Flu vaccine reduces the risk of falling ill, so we encourage all members of the RIT community who are able to get a flu shot to do so. To stay healthy this fall and winter:

- Avoid close contact with sick individuals
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your elbow
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer
- Seek medical care if you are ill

We will continue to monitor Ebola and influenza closely and we will provide updates as new information becomes available.

Additional Resources:

** Questions and Answers on Ebola by the CDC:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/qa.html>

** Cases of Ebola in the United States - <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/united-states-imported-case.html>