

Ongoing Ebola Outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Reminder to Screen for International Travel in Persons with Acute, Possibly Infectious Illness

July 22, 2019

An outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was declared on August 1, 2018. The outbreak has been ongoing since then, with 2,578 confirmed and probable EVD cases and 1,737 deaths reported as of July 20, 2019. Large (>1 million population) cities have also been affected, including Goma, which is on the border with Rwanda. Cases have also occurred in Uganda, but no local transmission has occurred there. Vaccination and other disease control efforts in the affected areas continue, but have been hampered by armed conflict. For the latest updates on this outbreak, see <https://www.who.int/ebola/situation-reports/drc-2018/en/>.

On July 15th, the World Health Organization declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) for EVD in the DRC. At this time, CDC/CDPH are not notifying Orange County Public Health about returning travelers from the affected area but notifications may be received about returning response workers from non-governmental agencies with whom CDC has implemented processes.

The risk of importation of Ebola virus into California remains very low but is not zero. However, many infectious diseases, such as hepatitis A, zika, and typhoid, are regularly introduced into Orange County by returning international travelers. Therefore, a best practice continues to be for healthcare providers in hospitals, emergency departments and clinics to routinely ask patients with acute and possibly infectious illness about recent international travel.

Provider and Facility Recommendations

- Routinely ask patients with signs or symptoms of acute, possibly infectious illness about recent travel.
- If there is a suspicion of EVD in a patient based on travel history and clinical presentation, take EVD specific precautions, including:
 - Immediately isolate the patient in a private room with in-room bathroom or covered bedside commode.
 - Rapidly notify Orange County Public Health at 714-834-8180.
 - Minimize the number of healthcare providers that contact the patient and limit contact to essential patient care. Document all healthcare provider contact with the patient.
 - EVD-specific infection control precautions (CDC):
<https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/clinicians/evd/infection-control.html>
- Additional EVD resources (CDPH):
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/EbolaHealthProfessionals.aspx>
- Have protocols in place to identify and isolate suspect cases and notify Orange County Public Health (714-834-8180) regarding suspected Ebola Virus Disease and other highly communicable or novel infectious diseases.

Contact Information

For questions or concerns, please contact the **Communicable Disease Control Division at 714-834-8180**.