Update on Ebola Outbreak

November 17, 2014

The University of St. Thomas Health Services and Study Abroad Office continues to closely monitoring the Ebola outbreak. The Office of Study Abroad has no students in or planning to travel to the countries where Ebola is endemic (Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone). Currently, all programs continue to operate normally, and all cancellation policies are intact.

Although the epidemic in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea is a very serious, the risk of acquiring infection in the United States continues to be very low. Individuals who have been hospitalized in the United States acquired the illness by direct contact with bodily fluids of an ill person from the endemic areas. Ebola can only be spread by direct contact with bodily fluids from and individual who has symptoms of the illness. Ebola cannot be transmitted through the air and can only be spread through direct contact with bodily fluids – blood, sweat, vomit, feces, urine, saliva or semen – of an infected person who is showing symptoms.

The University will provide updated information about the Ebola outbreak to the St. Thomas community when there is new information that could potentially impact faculty, staff and students.

The St. Thomas International Risk Assessment Committee meets on a frequent basis continues to closely monitoring the Ebola outbreak. This group will advise administrators and faculty directors regarding communication needs and possible interventions if they become necessary. Study abroad programs may be suspended based on recommendations from the World Health Organization, CDC, U.S. Department of state and in-country resources.

The University’s has implemented the following actions:

- All incoming international students from West Africa are being advised about the outbreak, possible travel complications if coming from impacted countries, symptoms of the Ebola virus, and to seek immediate health care should they become ill after arriving in this country.
- A student travel restriction is being issued for the following countries: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. This recommendation is consistent with the CDC’s current level 3 travel advisory. Revisions to this restriction will be made if the CDC makes changes in their recommendations.
- **UST Health Services** staff are knowledgeable about Ebola, the signs and symptoms of this disease, and the appropriate measures to take to contain the illness. Identification and transportation of patients who present with possible symptoms of Ebola to the appropriate care facilities will be taken.
- St. Thomas students approved to study abroad should contact the following:
- Health questions or concerns: UST Health Services: 651-962-6750 or healthservices@stthomas.edu
- Study Abroad policy: 651-962-6450 or studyabroad@stthomas.edu
- Academic or specific program queries: UST faculty director or program sponsor.

- Resources:
  - Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
  - Advice for Colleges, Universities, and Students about Ebola in West Africa
  - World Health Organization (WHO) - Ebola:
  - U.S. State Department:
  - MN Department of Health (MDH) – Ebola: