



COUNTY OF DUTCHESS
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE

October 9, 2014

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide a briefing on Dutchess County's preparedness efforts should a case of Ebola be suspected or confirmed in our county. Additionally, we are forwarding guidance from the CDC on how your agency can get ready and what you should do now to prepare. The Dutchess County Departments of Health and Emergency Response have protocols and plans already in place to respond to such an event. At this time, there are no cases of Ebola in Dutchess County or the surrounding counties.

Handling disease outbreaks is a core public health function, and the Dutchess County Department of Health has **legal authority** to respond to **public health** emergencies. The four crucial steps that need to be taken when dealing with the Ebola virus are detection, isolation, contact tracing, and treatment. Our public health system is ready to quickly identify a potential case through its daily surveillance efforts; evaluate the person and isolate them if needed; implement infection control practices; submit specimens for laboratory testing; conduct contact tracing of people who might have been exposed to a suspected case; and provide care for the patient, and facilitate decontamination.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently made available interim guidance for EMS providers. The guidance can be found at: [Visit the CDC website to read the interim guidance.](#)

Additionally, the CDC has provided a checklist for EMS providers on Ebola preparedness. You will find it attached.

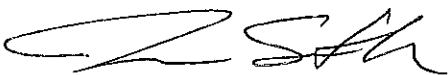
The Dutchess County 911 Communications Center will implement today at 6:00 PM a new screening protocol for the 911 call taking process. When indicated, the Public Safety Dispatcher will ask callers additional screening questions as recommended by the CDC. If we receive affirmative answers to these additional questions, the 911 Center will advise responding units to take Body Substance Isolation or BSI precautions. At that point, it is recommended that responding units follow their department's Bloodborne Pathogen policies for protection. We have attached the new guidance card for your review.

We are urging you to review your Bloodborne Pathogen plan/policies. This is an excellent time to review these protocols with your staff and make sure they are compliant. Additionally, you should ensure you have appropriate supplies and your staff can access them as per your plan.

Reporting of suspected cases is mandatory at the County, State and Federal Level. If you encounter a suspected Ebola patient, we ask that you notify the 911 Communications Center. We will notify the Dutchess County Department of Health. You will be asked to provide an agency contact name and phone number. The Dutchess County Health Department will then contact you.

Dutchess County is committed to keeping first responders educated on the topic and safe from Ebola. Should you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to the Dutchess County Department of Health at 845-486-3402 or email via at healthinfo@dutchessny.gov or the Dutchess County Department of Emergency Response at 845-486-2080 or via email at emergencyresponse911@dutchessny.gov.

Thank you



Dana Smith
Emergency Response Coordinator