



## **Ebola Update – October 17, 2014**

I share the concerns that many Americans have about Ebola, and want to be sure you have the full story about the current outbreak. First, I'd like to clarify the ways in which Ebola can and cannot be spread.

**What is Ebola?** Ebola virus is the cause of a viral hemorrhagic fever disease. Symptoms include: fever, headache, joint and muscle aches, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, lack of appetite, and abnormal bleeding. Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to ebolavirus though 8-10 days is most common.

**How is Ebola transmitted?** Ebola is transmitted through direct contact with the blood or bodily fluids of an infected symptomatic person or through exposure to objects (such as needles) that have been contaminated with infected secretions.

**Can Ebola be transmitted through the air?** No. Ebola is not a respiratory disease like the flu, so it is not transmitted through the air.

**Can I get Ebola from contaminated food or water?** No. Ebola is not transmitted through food in the United States. It is not transmitted through water.

**Can I get Ebola from a person who is infected but doesn't have any symptoms?** No. Individuals who are not symptomatic are not contagious. In order for the virus to be transmitted, an individual would have to have direct contact with an individual who is experiencing symptoms or has died of the disease.

You can also find all the latest news about the status of the Ebola outbreak by visiting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Ebola site at <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html>.

Next, I would like to update you on my response to the Ebola outbreak, as well as the larger response of the U.S. government. As your representative in Congress, I believe it is critical for the U.S. to invest sufficient resources to ensure we prevent any further spread of this disease, both in our own country and abroad. That is why I am doing all I can in Washington, DC, to stop the spread of Ebola in America and around the world:

- I joined my Democratic colleagues on the Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee in sending letters asking Subcommittee Chairman Kingston and Appropriations Committee Chairman Rogers to schedule an Appropriations Committee hearing to discuss Ebola funding for the CDC and the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

- I joined my congressional colleagues in sending letters to the California Hospital Association and the California Association of Public Hospitals urging them to ensure their member hospitals throughout California are taking all appropriate measures to train and prepare their staff to screen, diagnose, and treat any potential Ebola patients.
- I signed on to a letter calling for the President to allow military medical and technical personnel to provide care for patients in West Africa as part of our nation's effort to quell the Ebola outbreak internationally.

President Obama and his Administration are mounting an aggressive effort to respond to Ebola and keep the American people safe. The President has named Ron Klain, a former chief of staff to Vice Presidents Gore and Biden, to coordinate the government's response to Ebola. The President has also made clear that we will do everything we can to prevent further transmissions domestically, and he has continually emphasized that the epidemic in West Africa is a top national security priority at all levels of our government.

At the President's direction, our government is stepping up our anti-Ebola efforts across the board. We're working quickly to track down and monitor anyone who may have had contact with somebody showing symptoms of Ebola. New screening measures are being implemented at the American airports that receive nearly all of the passengers arriving from West Africa. And we're sharing lessons learned, so hospitals across the country can learn from Dallas' experience in treating the first U.S. cases of the disease.

The CDC is the lead agency for our government's response to Ebola. The CDC's public health experts have had 38 years of experience with Ebola cases in Africa. These experts are working closely with federal, state, and local authorities to ensure the best, most effective, and safest Ebola prevention practices are implemented nationwide. The CDC team is making specific improvements to personal protective equipment, oversight and monitoring of care, and enhanced training, while also creating a dedicated CDC response team – an Ebola SWAT team – that can be on the ground within a few hours at any hospital receiving a confirmed Ebola patient.