



STATE REPRESENTATIVE JAY BARNES

ROOM 415A • 751.2412 • Jay.Barnes@house.mo.gov

October 2, 2014

Director Gail Vasterling
Department of Health & Senior Services
912 Wildwood
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0570

Re: State Plan for Ebola

Dear Director:

Health officials confirmed the first case of Ebola diagnosed in the United States yesterday. Reports from Dallas, Texas indicate that the patient had traveled to Liberia and had presented at a hospital with symptoms, but was allowed to return home. After his illness grew worse, he returned to the hospital. NBC News reports that the patient did not receive appropriate treatment until his nephew contacted the Centers for Disease Control. There are further reports this morning of a potential Ebola diagnosis in Hawaii.

Public experts believe that, if Ebola comes to the United States in serious numbers, it can be effectively contained because of our health care infrastructure. Nevertheless, containment requires both a plan and execution. To that end, I write this morning seeking information on the Department's plans related to Ebola. Specifically:

1. Does the Department have a written protocol for actions to take in the event a person in Missouri is diagnosed with Ebola other than the "Methods of control" section of the Control of Communicable Diseases Manual referenced in Section 4.0 of the Division of Community and Public Health manual?
2. What steps has the Department taken or will it take to help ensure that a Missouri hospital does not make the same mistake that the hospital in Texas made – and inadvertently send a patient with Ebola home?
3. What steps will the Department take to notify the general public?

4. What steps will the Department take to identify, contact, and monitor persons with whom a person infected with Ebola had recent contact?
5. How will the Department coordinate efforts with the Centers for Disease Control?
6. How will the Department coordinate efforts with local health officials and statewide healthcare organizations?
7. The Department's existing Communicable Disease Investigation Manual indicates that "U.S. hospitals are well equipped to isolate cases and control spread of the virus." Are there designated hospitals in Missouri which are better equipped to handle a potential Ebola patient? Has the Department identified those hospitals?

As concerns grow over the spread of this disease, I believe it is vitally important for the Department to actively assure Missourians that state government is prepared to move quickly in the event of an Ebola diagnosis in our state.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours in service,



Rep. Jay Barnes