



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES

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*****HEALTH ALERT*****

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Updated “Guidance on Personal Protective Equipment To Be Used by Healthcare Workers During Management of Patients with Ebola Virus Disease in U.S. Hospitals, Including Procedures for Putting On (Donning) and Removing” (Doffing) is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/procedures-for-ppe.html>.

This guidance contains the following key principles:

1. Prior to working with Ebola patients, all healthcare workers involved in the care of Ebola patients must have received repeated training and have demonstrated competency in performing all Ebola-related infection control practices and procedures, and specifically in donning/doffing proper PPE.
2. While working in PPE, healthcare workers caring for Ebola patients should have no skin exposed.
3. The overall safe care of Ebola patients in a facility must be overseen by an onsite manager at all times, and each step of every PPE donning/doffing procedure must be supervised by a trained observer to ensure proper completion of established PPE protocols.

Healthcare providers should continue to be alert for symptoms and travel histories that might indicate ebola and evaluate patients’ risk of exposure. Nigeria is no longer a country of concern with regard to travel history. “Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) Algorithm for Evaluation of the Returned Traveler” and “Checklist for Patients Being Evaluated for Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)” are available under PATIENT EVALUATION at <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/index.html>. We continue to urge healthcare providers to first contact their local health departments, rather than the CDC, for help evaluating risk factors for persons presenting with ebola-like symptoms. Local health departments (LHDs) have the necessary information to help physicians use the CDC tools for initial ebola risk factor screenings and provide guidance on triage infection prevention. LHDs also have contact numbers for the Department of State Health Services Emerging and Acute Infectious Disease (EAID) Branch, which can contact the CDC for consultation as needed.

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) has the capacity to perform presumptive testing for ebola. All testing must be approved by DSHS prior to specimen submission. No ebola testing can be performed without an EAID evaluation, with the exception of those persons who are already identified as contacts of the two confirmed cases.