



PRESS RELEASE

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Ebola preparedness

Oct. 1, 2014, Fort Worth — Following confirmation of a case of Ebola in Dallas, leaders at JPS Health Network took immediate steps to ensure that John Peter Smith Hospital and all JPS outpatient clinics are prepared to respond in the unlikely event that Ebola surfaces in Tarrant County.

Guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have been in place at JPS since August. All incoming patients are asked if they have been out of the country within the last six months and, if so, if they have been to the Western African nations where Ebola is present. Beginning Wednesday, they also are asked if they have been in contact with anyone who has traveled to those countries — Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone or Nigeria. They also are asked about symptoms, including a fever higher than 101.5 degrees, severe headache, muscle aches, vomiting and diarrhea. Anyone responding affirmatively to all three questions would be immediately isolated.

JPS is prepared to treat anyone suspected of having Ebola. An Ebola patient would be hospitalized in one of numerous rooms equipped for isolation, which have negative-pressure ventilation systems to keep airborne particulate matter inside the room. Designated staff members would follow contact and droplet precautions, which include use of impermeable gowns and gloves, goggles and fit-tested N-95 respirators. Specimens requiring laboratory analysis would be handled in coordination with Tarrant County Public Health.

Leaders from across the network met Wednesday to review procedures and confirm that adequate inventories of all personal protective equipment are on hand, sufficient inpatient beds are available, staffing is appropriate, and that caregivers in all areas of the hospital are prepared for the role that they would play. We will continue to work closely with Tarrant County Public Health, the Texas Department of Health Services and the CDC to ensure that we are prepared for our role in protecting public health in Tarrant County.