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GAVIN NEWSOM
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Health Alert:

Monitoring Travelers Returning from the Democratic Republic of Congo or Guinea in the Setting of Ongoing Ebola Virus Disease Outbreaks

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The California Department of Public Health (CDPH), in collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has been closely monitoring the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreaks in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Guinea. The DRC Ministry of Health declared the EVD outbreak on February 7, 2021 and to date has reported 11 confirmed cases in the North Kivu province. Guinea declared an outbreak of EVD on February 14, 2021 in the Nzérékoré Region that borders Liberia, and to date there have been 17 cases and 4 deaths. The World Health Organization (WHO) is assisting both countries with investigations, therapeutics and vaccination. To date, there are no cases of EVD in the United States.

The risk for importation of Ebola virus into California remains very low. However, infectious diseases are regularly introduced into the state by returning California residents and travelers from all over the world. CDPH continues to remind healthcare providers in hospitals, emergency departments, and clinics to routinely ask patients with signs or symptoms of acute and possibly infectious illness about recent international travel.

The CDC has announced that travelers returning to the United States from the DRC and Guinea will need to be screened for symptoms and risk factors for EVD at disembarking airports. Travelers' information will be collected by CDC and transmitted to states and local public health departments so that these passengers can be monitored and triaged quickly to appropriate medical care if needed within their 21-day monitoring period. Risk factors for EVD include traveling to an EVD-affected area and having an EVD exposure which may include taking care of an ill patient or a sick loved one or attending a funeral. EVD symptoms include fever, headache, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle aches, and unexplained bleeding. Some of these symptoms overlap with other infectious diseases including flu, malaria, typhoid fever, and COVID-19. Of note, persons who do not have symptoms are not contagious for EVD. Ebola virus is transmissible via bodily fluids or objects contaminated with bodily fluids from persons ill with EVD. EVD has an incubation period of up to 21 days and thus travelers will be monitored for up to 21 days.

The CDPH recommends the following:

For healthcare providers and facilities:

- Implement appropriate infection control procedures in all settings. Travel history can inform specific infection control measures needed if there is suspicion of an infectious disease including EVD. Healthcare and Emergency Medical System providers should routinely ask patients with acute and possibly infectious illness about recent travel.
- If there is suspicion of EVD in a patient based on travel history and clinical presentation, the healthcare provider should be advised to take EVD specific precautions. These precautions include: immediate isolation of the patient in a private room with an in-room



