



To: Nursing faculty and students

From: New Mexico Nurses Association in Collaboration with the New Mexico Nursing Education Consortium (NMNEC)

Re: Ebola and student nurses

Date: October 31, 2014

The 2014 Ebola outbreak is the largest in history and requires long term planning and preparedness.

The fact that two registered nurses in Dallas became the first people to contract the Ebola virus in the U.S. underscores the serious ramifications for nurses and health care workers caring for Ebola patients. A top priority NMNA and nursing educators across New Mexico is the safety of our nurses, patients, our health care workers, our nursing students, our faculty, and our community. We jointly encourage all programs to develop a plan with clinical affiliates regarding students should there ever be a possible Ebola case.

NMNA has been monitoring and actively addressing the safety needs of nurses, nursing students, nursing faculty, and patients. NMNA is working to ensure that accurate and timely information is available to students and faculty. **For the latest information, please check ANA's resource: <http://www.nursingworld/topics/ebola/> for this site is updated regularly.**

In response to the growing questions and concerns from the nursing education community, we have put together the following FAQs that we hope you find helpful.

Q: Am I in danger of catching Ebola in the learning environment, in the clinical setting, or during my clinical experience?

A: Ebola is spread through direct contact with blood and body fluids. It is spread through direct contact (through broken skin or through your eyes, nose, or mouth) with blood and body fluids (like sweat, urine, feces, saliva, and vomit) and objects (like needles) that have been contaminated with blood or fluids of a person sick with Ebola. Ebola is not spread through air, water, or food.

A person infected with Ebola cannot spread the disease until symptoms appear. The average time from exposure to when signs or symptoms appear is 8 to 10 days (incubation period is 2 to 21 days). Signs include fever (higher than 101.5 F; low grade fever of 99.0 F should be investigated) and symptoms like severe headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain, or unexplained bleeding or bruising.

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/what-need-to-know-ebola.pdf>

Ebola is Not Airborne

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/infections-spread-by-air-or-droplets.pdf>

Q: How do I protect myself against Ebola as a member of the public?

A: There is no FDA-approved vaccine available for Ebola. To best protect yourself from Ebola:

- DO wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Do NOT touch the blood or body fluids (like urine, feces, saliva, vomit, sweat, and semen) of people who are sick.
- Do NOT handle items that may have come in contact with a sick person's blood or body fluids, like clothes, bedding, needles, or medical equipment.
- Do NOT touch the body of someone who has died of Ebola.
- When in doubt, contact your infection control officer or local health department.

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/what-need-to-know-ebola.pdf>

Q: Should nursing students be caring for Ebola patients?

A: We recommend that nursing students engaged in student learning clinical activities should not be in contact with highly suspected or confirmed Ebola. We recommend that only highly-trained and experienced response team members engage in care. Those who have not been through extensive personal protective equipment (PPE) training and patient management should NOT care for potential or actual patients with Ebola. We recommend strict adherence to universal precautions in the care of all patients.

Q: What happens if I am a student and come in contact with a potential Ebola patient?

A: Immediately engage with your preceptor, the charge nurse, and your instructor so that they can alert trained personnel to begin screening. Follow your agency and school policies and procedures regarding exposure. Based on best practice and current information, students or untrained personnel should not have contact with potential Ebola patients. Minimal patient contact is essential while assessment is underway and while appropriate departments, including infection control and the state health department, are notified.

Q: What are best practices for personal protective equipment (PPE)?

A: Education and training in the proper use of PPE by health care workers while caring for Ebola patients is critical to prevent exposure and transmission of Ebola. Refer to agency policies and procedures and best practices. We recommend that nursing students engaged in student learning clinical activities restrict their contact with highly suspected

or confirmed Ebola. We also highly recommend that only highly-trained and experienced response team members engage in care. Those who have not been through extensive PPE training and patient management should NOT care for potential or actual patients with Ebola.

Link to Ebola training video for health care workers:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9sOT4EH66c>

Q: What is the travel advisory to Africa and implications for nursing students?

A: CDC urges all US residents to avoid nonessential travel to Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone because of unprecedented outbreaks of Ebola in those countries. CDC recommends that travelers to these countries protect themselves by avoiding contact with the blood and body fluids of people who are sick with Ebola or Ebola-like symptoms.

Source: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/warning/ebola-guinea>

Please be aware that if you are quarantined upon entry back into the US with any symptoms, it may significantly impact your ability to complete your coursework and fulfill graduation requirements. The 21-day quarantine due to symptoms would be applied to ensure that the student would have no symptoms before returning to school.

Q: Where should I go to find the most reliable and valid current information?

A: Because this situation continues to evolve, it is critical that you consult reliable and valid information. Please go to the following websites:

- American Nurses Association: : <http://www.nursingworld/topics/ebola/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) www.cdc.gov
ED Evaluation and Management Guidelines for Possible Ebola Patients
<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/ed-management-patients-possible-ebola.html>

Ebola is Not Airborne

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/infections-spread-by-air-or-droplets.pdf>

- New Mexico Department of Health (DOH)
[Ebola Evaluation Algorithm](#)
[Ebola Virus Disease - Guide](#)
[Ebola Virus Disease - Guide](#)

[Ebola Guide to Early Recognition and Evaluation in Hospital Settings](#)
[Ebola Virus Disease - Guide](#)

[Ebola Guide to Early Recognition in Outpatient Settings](#)