



## Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Ebola Preparedness in Dickinson & Iron Counties**

Kingsford, Michigan – August 8, 2014. In the last few months, the CDC and World Health Organization and other partners have been actively engaged in response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Since the first report surfaced in March, there have been more than 1,700 cases reported and, more than half of these have resulted in death. This is the largest Ebola outbreak in history and the first in West Africa. No Ebola cases have been transmitted in the United States and the likelihood of this outbreak spreading outside of West Africa is very low. It is more likely that the countries surrounding Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone and Nigeria may see cases because of the wide geographic spread of this outbreak.

Dickinson-Iron District Health Department Medical Director, Terry Frankovich, M.D., M.P.H., said with many non-profit organizations removing staff from affected countries and routine international travel, the Upper Peninsula needs to be prepared for any travelers to those nations who were potentially exposed to the virus. "I want to stress that unlike many infections which are transmitted from one person to another by breathing in the same air, Ebola is spread only through exposure to the bodily fluids of someone with the disease, Frankovich said. "Even though the risk of Ebola appearing in our area is very low, it's important that communities are prepared.

The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department has been communicating with its hospital partners and other organizations to address any concerns that may arise related to the Ebola virus for travelers returning from African nations affected by the virus. Out of an abundance of caution, we are sharing this information with the community. Our intention is to reassure residents that this infection is on our radar and that the safety of the community is, as always, the foremost priority of local public health.

According to Dr. Frankovich, "Local hospitals have plans in place to quickly isolate and treat anyone who has traveled back from an affected nation, been exposed to the virus, and is showing symptoms of Ebola. Here in the U.S., it is much easier to isolate and manage patients than in the affected West Africa nations".

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The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department works closely with the state health department, area medical providers and the federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to monitor any infectious disease concerns in the region.

Area physicians and medical staff are being alerted to the need to be aware of any patient returning from the affected region who are manifesting symptoms of the disease. More information on Ebola is available to everyone at [cdc.gov/vhf/Ebola](http://cdc.gov/vhf/Ebola).

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