

**From:** [MC Communications](#)  
**To:** [MC Communications!](#)  
**Subject:** Ebola Preparedness at Montgomery College  
**Date:** Thursday, October 30, 2014 12:40:24 PM

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**MONTGOMERY COLLEGE**  
Office of Public Safety and Emergency Management

October 30, 2014

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Montgomery College Community  
**From:** Stephen Maloney, Director of Public Safety & Emergency Management  
**Subject:** Ebola Preparedness at Montgomery College

Safety and emergency preparedness are the guiding values of Public Safety & Emergency Management, which is why we are providing this synopsis of Ebola risk and preparedness at the College. Since the early symptoms of Ebola are similar to those of the flu, we are also asking every member of our community to consider getting vaccinated for the seasonal flu. As detailed later in this memo, reducing flu infections is one of the most effective ways we can support our community in preparedness for all potential communicable diseases.

We have been working closely with the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), as well as the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), to ensure we are following the most current preparedness protocols as defined by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Ebola is a potentially lethal disease with few treatment options. However, no cases have occurred in our region, the mechanism of transmission is well understood, and transmission can be mitigated through good infection control.

**What precautions have been taken in our region?**

A number of protections for our region are already in place, and many of them are detailed at the web links found at the end of this memo.

- Travel restrictions for people who are ill have been enacted in the nations affected by the current West African outbreak.
- Customs and Border Protection agents stationed at New York's Kennedy, Newark Liberty, Washington's Dulles, Chicago's O'Hare and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta airports are screening passengers arriving from the affected nations for symptoms.
- Our healthcare system has the resources to rapidly identify potential cases, isolate individuals and perform testing. DHHS is highly experienced in infectious disease surveillance and contact tracking.
- Our local hospitals are working directly with DHMH (whose laboratory is certified to test for Ebola) and DHHS to ensure they are ready for the detection, classification, testing and prevention of Ebola. They are following CDC infection, prevention and reporting protocols, and have plans in place to provide care and guidance for suspected

cases and contacts.

- Our Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers are also following CDC guidance on patient assessment, personal protection and reporting. Call-takers at the Montgomery County Emergency Communications (911) Center have received instruction on screening callers for Ebola risk factors.

### **What is MC doing right now?**

Montgomery College has been following CDC guidance to put in place administrative, environmental and communication measures to prepare for Ebola. Due to our regular influenza preparedness activities, many of those measures were already in place. Some examples are below.

- CDC hygiene posters had already been installed in common areas around each campus and off-site facility, as well as in the restrooms, libraries, labs, and learning centers. Campus Facilities departments are in the process of adding new posters in areas of new construction. Simply covering your cough and washing your hands are effective strategies for the prevention of any number of potentially infectious diseases.
- Campus Facilities and Environmental Safety have confirmed all disinfectant products currently in use are certified by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as effective against a particular group of viruses, including Ebola, influenza, and enterovirus D68.
- Environmental Safety has ensured instructions on appropriate cleaning measures have been provided to campus facilities, building services, the libraries, athletics, wellness, the pools, and to contacts at off-site locations.
- Campus Facilities staff have been reminded to review their Bloodborne Pathogens training and ensure they continue to be familiar with the use of their personal protective equipment.
- Montgomery College and DHHS have established a protocol for responding to a potential Ebola case on one of our campuses or off-site facilities. That protocol is briefly described in the *What if?* scenarios, below.
- Since August 19, Environmental Safety has placed four instructive articles on Ebola in Inside MC Online (<http://insidemc.montgomerycollege.edu/>). Regular articles will continue for the next few months.

### **What if...?**

It is unlikely that we will see any transmissions of Ebola in Maryland, much less at Montgomery College. Please keep in mind that the early symptoms of Ebola (fever, malaise, headache) are much more likely to be indications of flu or, even, malaria. However, instructions for responding to some potential, but unlikely, Ebola scenarios are below.

*What if a person who tested positive for Ebola were found to be a Montgomery College student, employee or visitor?* DHHS would immediately backtrack the symptoms and corresponding travel/activities in a very detailed manner. If the person were found to have been symptomatic at the time of attending classes or other activities at the College, then DHHS would work with us, DHMH and CDC to define the next best steps. Those steps would be based on the specific circumstances of the patient, his or her symptoms at the time of being at the College, the time since that symptomatic visit, and other factors. We would keep the College community informed every step of the way.

*What if I am a student or employee and believe I might have Ebola or someone I know at Montgomery College might have Ebola?* This is extremely unlikely, since Ebola is difficult to transmit, many precautions are in place, and it is unlikely any of us would be in a position to know someone else's travel history and health condition. If this were to occur, we expect you to take the two actions below.

- If you believe you might have Ebola, call your personal healthcare provider, or call a hospital emergency department or call 911. Calling with concerns before visiting allows the health care provider or emergency department to better prepare to serve you. If you believe someone else at MC has Ebola, instruct that person to call his or her personal healthcare provider, or call a hospital emergency department or call 911. **AND,**
- Call me. **If you are concerned that you or someone else at MC has Ebola, you must call me (Steve Maloney, 240-567-4292) and let me know. If I do not answer the phone, follow the instructions on the voicemail message to contact me.** I will then take the next step in the process developed in consultation with DHHS. Anonymous reports concerning third parties will not be accepted.

You should also keep in mind that Ebola is transmitted through direct contact with the body fluids of a symptomatic, infected person. It is not transmitted through the air or via casual contact in a classroom or office setting.

*What if I am a student or employee who has recently returned to the United States from a country where the Ebola outbreaks are occurring?* If you have had a high-risk or low-risk exposure (defined below) take the two actions below.

- Call your personal healthcare provider, or call a hospital emergency department or call 911. **AND,**
- Call me. **If you have had a high-risk or low-risk exposure (defined below), please call me (Steve Maloney, 240-567-4292) and tell me about your exposure. If I do not answer the phone, follow the instructions on the voicemail message to contact me.** I will then take the next step in the process developed in consultation with DHHS. DHHS will likely contact you and provide thorough education about health monitoring, immediately reporting symptoms and staying away from other people if symptoms develop.

Exposure Definitions (<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/case-definition.html>):

- **High Risk** - needle stick, mucous membrane (eyes, nose, mouth) **exposure to blood or body fluids of an Ebola patient**; direct skin contact with, or exposure to blood or body fluids of, an Ebola patient without appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE); **processing blood or body fluids of a confirmed Ebola patient** without appropriate PPE or standard biosafety precautions; **direct contact with a dead body** without appropriate PPE in a country where an Ebola outbreak is occurring (Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone).
- **Low Risk** - **Household contact with an Ebola patient**; **other close contact with Ebola patients in health care facilities or community settings**. Close contact is defined as being within approximately 3 feet (1 meter) of an Ebola patient or within the patient's room or care area for a prolonged period of time (e.g., health care personnel, household members) while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment (i.e., standard, droplet, and contact precautions); having direct brief contact (e.g., shaking hands) with an Ebola patient while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment. Brief interactions, such as walking by a person or moving through a hospital, do not constitute close contact.

- **No Known Exposure** - Having been in a country in which an Ebola outbreak occurred within the past 21 days and having had no high or low risk exposures.

*What if I am a Health Sciences student who will participate in clinicals at healthcare facilities?* You should consult with your instructor. The participating healthcare facilities have received detailed instructions from DHMH in measures to prevent Ebola transmission, and you should familiarize yourself with them. Keep in mind the only transmissions in the U.S have involved intensive care nurses providing invasive care for a known and extremely ill Ebola patient.

*What if I am a Building Services Worker and I am concerned about potential Ebola exposure during cleaning operations?* You should continue, as always, to follow Universal Precautions by assuming all human body fluids are infectious. Always wear gloves when the potential for contact with human body fluids exists. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water and wear eye protection if there is a chance of splashing.

### **Where can I find additional information at any time?**

For up-to-date information on Ebola preparedness at the College and in our area, please regularly consult the sources below. All agencies, including DHMH, DHHS and Montgomery College, follow guidance promulgated by the CDC.

- Montgomery College's Office of Environmental Safety is the lead unit in the College's Ebola preparedness. On Mondays, as needed, Environmental Safety will provide Ebola preparedness updates in Inside MC Online (<http://insidemc.montgomerycollege.edu/>). These occasional updates will run for the next few months, and include any new information or guidance.
- The weekly updates will also be shared on the College Facebook page and posted to Twitter. Look us up at [facebook.com/montgomerycollege](https://www.facebook.com/montgomerycollege) and [twitter.com/montgomerycoll](https://twitter.com/montgomerycoll).
- Environmental Safety has created a web page devoted to guidance on protecting yourself from communicable diseases, including Ebola (<http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/EDU/Department3.aspx?id=69509>).
- Montgomery County has created a web page, DHHS Ebola Facts and Resources (<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/LeftNav/Ebola.html>).
- DHMH has created an Ebola page (<http://phpa.dhmd.maryland.gov/OIDEOR/SIPOR/SitePages/ebola.aspx>).
- CDC has a comprehensive set of Ebola web pages (<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html>), including a Frequently Asked Questions about Ebola page (<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/qa.html>).
- 311 is Montgomery County's phone number for non-emergency government information and services. MC311 has been provided with Ebola information by technical experts at DHHS. If you dial 311 when in the county, you can get basic Ebola questions answered.
- Call Environmental Safety (240-567-4308; additional contacts: <http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/EDU/Department3.aspx?id=25888>).

### **Conclusion**

Ebola is a terrible disease that is devastating three countries that were already in a vulnerable state. The healthcare system in the United States makes an outbreak here very unlikely. One person has died of Ebola in the United States.

Last year, about 36,000 people died of the flu. One of the most effective actions you can take to support our community is to focus on not getting the flu. By reducing the occurrence of influenza-like illness, we reduce potential false positive assessments for Ebola and other serious viruses, and make the jobs of our healthcare workers far easier. Wash your hands, cover your coughs and sneezes, stay home if you are sick, and consider getting vaccinated against the seasonal flu.

You can get vaccinated through your personal physician, large retailers (for example, CVS, Giant, Safeway), Montgomery County Flu Clinics (<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/resident/flu.html>), or other safety net clinics (<http://www3.montgomerycountymd.gov/311/Solutions.aspx?SolutionId=1-N47OG>).

If you have additional questions or concerns that cannot be answered through the sources identified above, please call or email the College's Environmental Safety Manager, Sharmila Pradhan ([sharmila.pradhan@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:sharmila.pradhan@montgomerycollege.edu), 240-567-4308) or me ([stephen.maloney@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:stephen.maloney@montgomerycollege.edu), 240-567-4292).