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HHS ANNOUNCES 35 U.S. HOSPITALS IDENTIFIED AS EBOLA TREATMENT CENTERS

CDC issues guidance for states and hospitals to identify Ebola treatment centers, assessment hospitals

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) today [announced](#) that state health officials have identified 35 hospitals with Ebola treatment centers, with more expected in the coming weeks. In addition, as part of a tiered-hospital strategy, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) today released interim [guidance](#) for states and hospitals to use as they identify and confirm Ebola treatment centers and interim [guidance](#) to use as they identify Ebola assessment hospitals.

The announcements were part of an [update](#) from the White House on the government's efforts to respond to Ebola and the need for immediate, additional funding to support these efforts. In a [statement](#), AHA President and CEO Rich Umbdenstock said, "America's hospitals are investing enormous time and resources to enhance our country's readiness for the new and real threat of Ebola," and he reiterated the AHA's request for "Congress to approve at least \$500 million in funds to help hospitals better prepare to win the battle against Ebola."

Highlights of today's HHS announcement and the CDC guidance follow.

Hospitals Identified as Ebola Treatment Centers

Ebola treatment centers are staffed, equipped and have been assessed to have current capabilities, training and resources to provide the complex treatment necessary to care for a person with Ebola, while minimizing risk to health care workers, according to HHS. The treatment centers have been assessed by a CDC Rapid Ebola Preparedness team, a concept created in October that brings together experts in all aspects of Ebola care, including staff training, infection control and personal protective equipment (PPE) use. The 35 hospitals with 53 treatment beds are located in 12 states and Washington, D.C., and additional facilities are expected to be added in the next several weeks. More than 80 percent of returning travelers from Ebola-stricken countries live within 200 miles of an Ebola treatment center, HHS said.

CDC Guidance on Identifying Ebola Treatment Centers

The CDC [guidance](#) is designed to assist state and local health departments and acute care hospitals as they develop preparedness plans to serve as Ebola treatment centers. The guidance includes a summary of the capability elements needed to function as an Ebola treatment center, including describing minimum capabilities for: facility infrastructure, patient transportation, laboratory, staffing, training, PPE, waste

management, worker safety, environmental services, clinical competency, operations coordination and interaction with the state and local public health authority. Functioning as an Ebola treatment center will be a decision made between state and local health authorities and the hospital's administration, informed by the results of a CDC Rapid Ebola Preparedness team site visit. Ebola treatment centers are prepared to provide comprehensive care to persons diagnosed with Ebola for the duration of a patient's illness, CDC says. In addition, the guidance says decisions to receive a confirmed Ebola patient should be informed by discussions with public health authorities and referring physicians, depending on the status of the patient.

CDC Guidance on Identifying Ebola Assessment Hospitals

The CDC [guidance](#) informs efforts to prepare hospitals identified as Ebola assessment hospitals, and includes a summary of the capability elements needed for those hospitals. Assessment hospitals are hospitals identified by state health officials, in collaboration with local health authorities and the hospital's administration, as the point of referral for those individuals being actively monitored and who develop symptoms compatible with Ebola. These hospitals must be prepared to receive and isolate a patient with possible Ebola and care for the patient until an Ebola diagnosis can be confirmed or ruled out and until discharge or transfer is completed. Ebola assessment hospitals have the capability to: evaluate and care for someone who is having the first symptoms of Ebola for up to 96 hours; initiate and coordinate testing for Ebola and for other diseases alternative diagnoses; and either rule out Ebola or transfer an individual with a confirmed Ebola diagnosis to an Ebola treatment center, as needed.

All Other Acute Care Hospitals

All other acute care hospitals should be prepared to identify and isolate a patient with possible Ebola and promptly inform their hospital infection-control program and their state or local health department, according to the [CDC guidance for emergency departments](#). For patients who have a higher probability of Ebola or are more severely ill, these hospitals should consider, in coordination with their local and state health departments, transferring the patient, in accordance with the state's plan, to either an Ebola assessment hospital or Ebola treatment center, which can provide Ebola testing and care for the higher-risk patients until an Ebola diagnosis is confirmed or ruled out.

Further Questions

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