



Special Message

AHA, AONE Respond to Washington Post Op-Ed on Ebola

October 16, 2014

AHA President and CEO Rich Umbdenstock and American Organization of Nurse Executives CEO Pamela Thompson on behalf of the nation's hospitals submitted the letter below to the Washington Post in response to an Oct. 14 op-ed that questioned hospitals' preparedness and dedication to fighting Ebola. An edited version (http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/hospitals-are-prepared-for-ebola-and-other-emergencies/2014/10/16/add6af86-53ed-11e4-b86d-184ac281388d_story.html) is available online and will appear in the paper Friday.

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The Oct. 14 opinion piece, "U.S. hospitals are not prepared for Ebola threat," unnecessarily enflames the serious situation surrounding Ebola in the U.S. as all clinicians and their hospitals work to improve readiness and reassure their communities. Hospitals have proven time and again that they are prepared for all types of emergencies, and are able to properly care for patients and health care workers. This is the first time our nation has dealt with Ebola and it is a time to pull together and learn from our colleagues' experience with this serious disease.

The American Hospital Association (AHA) has urged hospitals to continually conduct drills on proper precautions, including putting on and taking off personal protective

equipment. Drills should include all first-contact personnel, clinical providers, ancillary staff and any other staff, but especially those at the bedside, as appropriate. The AHA has shared updated news and guidance from the CDC with all hospitals. We continuously update hospital leaders on developments through nation-wide advisories as learnings become available.

The AHA agrees that hospital preparedness funding is critical. Clearly this crisis shows the need for additional funding to meet the challenge.

As the CDC reviews their current recommendations and protocols, America's hospitals will also continue to reevaluate their protocols so that we can face this challenge as we have done so nobly with other infectious diseases in the past.

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