



January 12, 2015

Important Updated Information on Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) for BC Physicians

Preparedness efforts to deal with any potential case of EVD in BC have been underway for several months now and three individuals who returned to BC from Ebola affected countries in West Africa have been tested for EVD. All were negative and there have been no EVD cases in BC or Canada to date. However, as long as the outbreak continues in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, there is potential for returning healthcare workers and other travelers to develop the disease in BC as recently occurred with a Scottish nurse who became ill on return to the UK.

Provincial protocols have been developed by expert groups in BC and approved by the Provincial Ebola Task Force. These protocols are available at:

<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pho/physician-resources-ebola.html>

In particular there are detailed protocols for primary care physicians:

<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pho/pdf/bc-ebola-virus-disease-primary-care-guidelines.pdf>

For Emergency departments: <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pho/pdf/emergency-department-evd-risk-assessment-algorithm.pdf>

And details on public health follow up and management of contacts including returning healthcare workers <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pho/pdf/british-columbia-ebola-virus-disease-evd-contact-investigation-and-management-guideline.pdf>

Recent events around assessment of at risk patients for EVD have tested these protocols and identified where additional guidance is needed. For the most part, however, these protocols have worked well and allowed for safe and efficient assessment, testing, care and management of patients. These protocols were developed so we can provide the best possible support to patients in a way that protects the safety of our healthcare workers and facilities in BC. We expect that all physicians will be familiar with them and follow them. If in any doubt or if you have any concerns about possible Ebola in a patient **contact your local Medical Health Officer (MHO) immediately** (see contact information below). The MHOs in BC are up to date on the latest information about EVD and will provide you with risk assessment support and guidance on safe management of your patient.

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If you should assess a patient as being at risk or are considering EVD in a differential diagnosis, please contact your local MHO for a risk assessment and advice on how to proceed. Do NOT send the patient away to an Emergency Department or community laboratory with an EVD test requisition.

We have had 18 people, mostly healthcare workers, who have returned to BC from the affected countries in West Africa to date and we know of more who will be going to assist in the response in those countries over the coming months. We will be dealing with the low, but real, possibility of one of these people developing EVD or, more likely, a febrile illness for which we need to rule out EVD for at least the next year. To be prepared to do this safely and effectively all physicians in BC need to understand their role and the protocols in place. Please review the web links above and contact your MHO or our office should you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Dr. Perry Kendall
Provincial Health Officer



Dr. Bonnie Henry
Deputy Provincial Health Officer

Medical Health Officer Contact Information

When you call, be explicit that you are calling about an urgent matter related to Ebola. The medical health officer for your region can be reached at the following numbers:

- Fraser Health: 604 587-3828 (M-F, 8:30-4:30) OR 604-527-4806 (after hours)
- Interior Health: 1 866 457-5648 (24/7)
- Island Health: 250 519-3406 (M-F, 8:30-5:00) OR 1 800 204-6166 (after hours)
- Northern Health: 250 565-2000 (24/7)
- Vancouver Coastal Health: 604 675-3900 (M-F, 8:30-5:00) OR 604-527-4893 (after hours)

Office of the Provincial Health Officer: 250 952 1330