



October 24, 2014

To: Ohio EMS Providers

In response to the recent events in Ohio and the United States regarding the Ebola virus, we would like to continue to partner with you to ensure preparedness in the event of a case in Ohio.

The Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Medical Services have agreed that information-sharing protocols between local public health and EMS providers and other emergency medical responders are helpful to ensuring safety of those who may be first on the scene to assist an individual known to be exposed to the Ebola virus.

First, those individuals who have come into contact with a person known to have Ebola have been provided an acknowledgement form by the local health department (LHD) categorizing the level of risk of infection based upon the individual's exposure paired with the appropriate intervention to contain and monitor the individual. This contact schedule provides the confidentiality necessary to allow for effective control by LHDs. The individual being monitored for Ebola exposure is required to sign the acknowledgement, which also stipulates that the person is responsible for notifying any first responder with whom they come in contact of their exposure category and the necessary intervention. This requirement was added specifically to the monitoring protocols to address the concern of first responders, including EMS providers, in handling a person who may be suspected of having the Ebola virus.

In addition to this safeguard, the LHDs are requiring contact from the individual to the LHD immediately upon the individual experiencing any symptoms of concern. The LHD will, in turn, contact local EMS agencies and their respective emergency medical dispatch (EMD) agencies and inform them as to the individual's exposure category.

The release of contact information is necessary to protect the health of EMS providers and first responders. However, preliminary access to contact information may compromise a healthy individual's privacy, unfairly stigmatize the individual in his community, and create a false sense of security when unidentified cases may remain a risk to the community, EMS providers, and first responders. Similarly, EMS providers and first responders are not provided contact information for other individuals known to



have contracted an infectious disease. Rather, EMS providers are accustomed to utilizing Universal Precautions to handle all patients with whom you interact.

We greatly appreciate your continued efforts as we work together to protect Ohio residents and visitors. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions, CONTACT INFO 614-799-6444.

From: DPS/ODH

Mel House, Executive Director, Division of EMS

Richard Hodges, Director, Ohio Department of Health