



Saint Louis County

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NEWS RELEASE

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Public Health, hospitals work together to prepare in case Ebola response needed

While the risk remains extremely low, the stakes are high, and that has led to a strong, collaborative effort among area hospitals and the St. Louis County Public Health Division to prepare for the possibility of an Ebola case in the Northland. County Public Health professionals, infectious disease specialists at Essentia Health, St. Luke's, Fairview Range and other hospitals in the region, and representatives of the Minnesota Department of Health are communicating regularly to keep each other updated on what each is doing to prepare and train.

“It’s important for people to realize we are preparing, not because we think we will see an Ebola case here, but because being ready for the unexpected is a big part of the work we do,” said Amy Westbrook, Public Health division director for St. Louis County. “And really, a lot of the conversation and teamwork is similar to what we’ve done to prepare for past potential health threats such as H1N1 and SARS. It’s making sure we know who’s responsible for what, so that if a response is ever needed, we have the necessary people and resources in place.”

Examples of preparations include: hospital staff training with personal protective equipment (PPEs) including putting on, working in and safely removing the gear; identifying how and to where potential patients will be transported for diagnosis, isolation and treatment; and how information can be safely shared while protecting patient privacy.

All hospitals are required to be equipped to identify and isolate patients with Ebola. If there was a situation of a person possibly exposed to Ebola requiring quarantine, the public health system would be responsible for monitoring the person and providing food, medication and any other necessities. The Minnesota Department of Health continues to provide updated information to all

from the Centers for Disease Control.

To learn more about Ebola, its signs and symptoms, and how it's spread, visit cdc.gov/ebola.

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Media questions about Ebola and coordinated preparations/response should be directed to

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