

14-1348

MOTION

Ebola is a virus which is transmitted to people from wild animals and spreads in the human population through human-to-human transmission. Symptoms typically appear within two to twenty-one days after exposure and can include fever, weakness, internal bleeding, organ failure, and death. The mortality rate for Ebola is high and recovery is slow for those who survive. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that Ebola only spreads after the manifestation of symptoms and is transmitted through direct contact with infected bodily fluids.

Recent media reports have documented an outbreak of Ebola in West Africa which has affected nations such as Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Liberia, Senegal, and Guinea. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), as of September 28, 2014 the number of suspected or confirmed deaths in Africa attributed to this outbreak totals 3,338 people. The WHO states that the current outbreak in Africa is the largest and most complex outbreak since the virus was discovered in 1976.

Recently, the first case of of Ebola in the United States was diagnosed at a hospital in Dallas, Texas after a patient arrived by plane from Liberia. Although reports note that the hospital failed to make the diagnosis which left him in the community for several days while he was contagious, the reports also state that none of those individuals who had contact with the patient are exhibiting symptoms of Ebola. According to the CDC, the United States public health and medical systems are equipped to contain Ebola and the virus can be stopped through case finding, isolation of ill people, contacting people exposed to the ill person, and further isolation of contacts who develop symptoms.

The Ebola epidemic occurring in Africa and the current case of Ebola in the United States constitutes a serious public health issue. The Los Angeles County Department of Health, the CDC, and other applicable health agencies and organizations have the most recent information regarding the virus. While it is important that Los Angeles residents be informed and their health safeguarded, we should also remain dispassionate and objective in our goal to become well-informed of the ramifications of the current case in Texas. Therefore, the Council should request that applicable health agencies and City departments to report to Council regarding the current Ebola case in Texas and how best to inform and safeguard the health of City residents.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Council: (1) instruct applicable City Departments, such as the Emergency Management Department, to report to Council relative to the public health issues associated with the Ebola case identified in Texas, including but not limited to lessons learned and best practices to inform and safeguard the health of City residents, and (2) request the Los Angeles County Department of Health, the CDC, and other applicable health agencies and organizations and experts to report to Council regarding the issues identified above.

PRESENTED BY: Paul Koretz
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SECONDED BY: Bernard C. Park

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