

Overview

As Texas continues to increase its Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) preparedness, DSHS is issuing the following guidance to local communities as a basis for statewide healthcare delivery planning and operational activities.

Guidance Details

- The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston (UTMB) and Methodist Richardson Medical Center – in partnership with UT Southwestern Medical Center and Parkland Health & Hospital System – are available to receive laboratory-confirmed Ebola patients.
 - The two health care facilities have designated staff, conducted training, modified facilities and developed policies necessary for Ebola-specific treatment units.
 - Both facilities are now operational for long-term care of Ebola patients - not for care of suspected patients. DSHS will determine whether or not to transfer an Ebola patient to UTMB or Methodist after discussion with appropriate health care administrators and medical staff. The decision will be based on the capabilities and capacity of the facility where the patient was diagnosed, EMS capability, transport stress on the patient, differential diagnostics, and patient preferences.
- It is imperative that all areas of the state plan for the care of an Ebola Patient Under Investigation (PUI) and for initial care of a diagnosed Ebola patient.
 - Health care communities must examine the capabilities and capacities of health care facilities through local health care coalitions, Regional Advisory Committees (RACs) or local governmental coordination. This examination should include but not be limited to:
 - the willingness of facilities capable of handling an Ebola patient to accept inter-facility transfers;
 - the willingness, capability and impact on the community of local EMS that might transport a suspect or infected patient; and
 - the overall impact on the community's hospital/trauma capacity.
- Community plans should be developed that address the continuum of Ebola patient management to include screening, diagnosis, transport, care, decontamination, waste management, and, to address a worst case scenario, mortuary affairs. Critical considerations include health care worker protection. It is important to exercise these plans to identify gaps and apply corrective actions in advance of an actual event.
- The Department of State Health Services is committed to this preparedness effort. DSHS will ensure that it issues guidelines and framework that enable local planning and response activities. DSHS will provide subject matter expertise in areas of epidemiology, laboratory testing, regulatory, public health and medical preparedness, and public information. Upon request after an Ebola event, DSHS will aid or facilitate local planning and will provide on-site epidemiologic, public health and emergency response staff to support response activities. DSHS will also encourage cross-regional exchange and sharing of information that supports Texas operating as a system able to manage an Ebola patient under a variety of circumstances.

For more information, contact:

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