

# PORTAGE COUNTY LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

## JOINT COMMAND TEAM

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Portage County Health Department  
Ravenna City Health Department  
Kent City Health Department

PCHD 330-296-9919  
RCHD 330-296-4478  
KCHD 330-678-8109

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Press Release  
October 16, 2014

Becky Lehman, PIO  
330-296-9919, ext. 137

### *Is there a threat of Ebola in Portage County?*

- Stay calm. Portage County has NO cases of Ebola, and the threat of Ebola virus transmission in Portage County is extremely low.
- At this time, because the nurse who tested positive for Ebola visited Summit County on October 10-13, Summit County Public Health is conducting the communicable disease investigations with people she contacted during her visit.
- After preliminary investigation, SCPH has not identified any public events or large public gatherings attended by the affected healthcare worker in Summit County, Portage County, or any other surrounding counties.
- It appears as though the healthcare worker who has Ebola had limited social contact outside of a small number of family and friends.
- There is no need to close schools or cancel events.

### *Is there a threat of Ebola at Kent State University?*

- Stay calm. There are NO cases of Ebola on KSU Campus.
- The nurse who tested positive for Ebola did not visit KSU during her visit.
- Three family members who had contact with the nurse who tested positive for Ebola work in administrative services at Kent State University, and staff members in those departments have been briefed. The three employees do not teach in the classroom and have little or no contact with students.
- The identity of the employees will remain confidential to protect their privacy.
- They have not reported any symptoms. Out of an abundance of caution, KSU has asked the three employees to remain off campus for the next 21 days and self-monitor per the CDC protocol.
- Classes are not cancelled. All KSU buildings remain open. Regular campus activities, including Homecoming, will continue as planned.

### *Can you tell me more about Ebola infection?*

- Ebola is a rare and potentially deadly disease caused by infection with one of the Ebola virus strains.
- Ebola is spread by touching the blood and bodily fluids (including but not limited to urine, saliva, sweat, feces, vomit, breast milk, and semen) of a person who is sick with Ebola, or things with their blood and bodily fluids on it like clothes and bedding.



- Ebola is not spread through the air, food, or water.
- Patients are contagious only when they are symptomatic and show signs of a fever. Symptoms include:
  - fever (greater than 100.4 F)
  - severe headache
  - muscle pain
  - weakness
  - diarrhea
  - vomiting
  - stomach pain
  - unexplained bleeding or bruising
- Coughing and sneezing are not symptoms of Ebola. They are symptoms of the common cold or a respiratory virus, such as the flu.
- Anyone believing that they have been in contact with a person with Ebola should contact their health care provider.
- There is no FDA-approved vaccine or medicine to treat Ebola. However, treatment can be offered for symptom management, such as keeping the patient hydrated, maintaining normal oxygen and blood pressure, and treating other infections as they occur.

***What can I do to make sure I don't catch Ebola?***

- Ebola is spread through direct contact with blood and bodily fluids (including but not limited to urine, saliva, sweat, feces, vomit, breast milk, and semen) of an infected and symptomatic person. Wash your hands frequently **with soap and water** for 30-60 seconds.
- Do not handle items that may have come in contact with blood and bodily fluids.
- Seek medical care immediately if you develop a fever (greater than 100.4 F), severe headache, muscle pain, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, and unexplained bleeding or bruising and have had contact with someone who has been diagnosed with Ebola.

***What is Portage County doing to respond to Ebola?***

- The local health departments have been working with community partners for years to plan a strongly coordinated community response to public health emergencies. The Incident Command Structure, including the Joint Information Center (JIC), is an efficient and well-planned way to prepare for and respond to public health and safety concerns.
- In response to the public health concern of Ebola, the Joint Information Center, or JIC, has been activated in Portage County. This means designated Information Officers at several community agencies come together to ensure we are communicating effectively between agencies and with the public about Ebola. This group also ensures that local residents, families, healthcare providers, and first responders have the most up-to-date information about Ebola.
- The JIC includes: PCHD, Kent City Health Department (KCHD), Portage County Emergency Management Agency (EMA), Robinson Memorial Hospital, and Kent State University. In addition, to the JIC, the partners are engaged in the following activities:
- ***Kent City Health Department:*** Because the area of highest concern in Portage County is Kent State University, Kent City Health Department is working diligently to resolve any issues of concern in that jurisdiction.
- ***Portage County Health Department*** is fully engaged in monitoring the health status of its residents and is working closely with KCHD and Ohio Department of Health in this regard.
- ***Portage County Emergency Management Agency (EMA)*** has activated their staff to monitor the Ebola situation.



- **Robinson Memorial Hospital** is taking extensive precautions to protect staff and increase readiness to care for potential Ebola exposure or confirmed cases.
- **KSU University Health Services** has activated its internal Incident Command Structure on a small scale.

***What else is being done outside of Portage County?***

- As of October 15, Ohio Department of Health has activated its Ebola preparedness plan.
- As of October 15, Summit County Public Health has activated its Incident Command Structure (ICS). Because the nurse who tested positive for Ebola in Dallas on October 14 visited Summit County on October 10-13, SCPH is conducting the communicable disease investigations with people she contacted during her visit.

***Where can I get more information?***

- Call Summit County Public Health's Ebola information line at 330-926-3939, or
- Call Ohio Department of Health's Ebola call center at 1-866-800-1404.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/ebola](http://www.cdc.gov/ebola).
- Ohio Department of Health at [www.odh.gov/](http://www.odh.gov/).
- Portage County Health Department at [www.co.portage.oh.us/healthdepartment.htm](http://www.co.portage.oh.us/healthdepartment.htm).
- Kent City Health Department at [www.kentpublichealth.org](http://www.kentpublichealth.org).
- "Like" Portage Prepares on Facebook and Twitter for updates.