



Eastern  
Health

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Eastern Health to Hold Ebola Preparedness Exercises**

**October 2, 2014 – St. John’s:** Eastern Health announced today that it will hold a series of simulated emergency preparedness exercises to evaluate the organization’s processes and procedures for managing potential cases of the Ebola virus. The exercises are scheduled to take place during the week of October 6, 2014.

“While a case of Ebola has been confirmed in the United States, the risk of Ebola spreading throughout Canada remains very low,” said Dr. David Allison, Medical Officer of Health at Eastern Health. “Eastern Health has infection control systems and procedures in place that are designed to limit the spread of infection, protect health care workers, and provide the best care possible for the patient. The purpose of this exercise is to further challenge and validate our procedures to ensure that possible cases of Ebola, or other infectious diseases, are correctly contained, diagnosed appropriately and treated quickly.”

The exercises will be held at the Health Sciences Centre, the Janeway Children's Health and Rehabilitation Centre and St. Clare’s Mercy Hospital that will see a team of relevant experts follow a patient through various scenarios and provide guidance and support to the employees providing the care and support to the patient. Success of the exercises will be determined through Eastern Health’s ability to validate its practices and identify gaps where they may exist.

A number of Eastern Health programs and services will be directly involved in the exercises, including Infection Prevention and Control, Health Emergency Management, Paramedicine and Medical Transport Division, Emergency Services, Laboratory Services, Critical Care, Environmental Services, Protection Services and Pastoral Care and Ethics.

Symptoms of Ebola include fever, severe headache, muscle pain, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain, unexplained hemorrhage (bleeding or bruising). Symptoms may appear anywhere from two to 21 days after exposure to Ebola. There is no specific treatment for Ebola, rather a patient would be treated based on their symptoms and recovery from Ebola depends on the patient’s immune response. Individuals who are experiencing symptoms consistent with Ebola who have recently travelled from West Africa should seek medical attention immediately.

“The Ebola virus does not spread easily from person to person as it is transmitted through direct contact with infected bodily fluids, and not through casual contact,” added Dr. Allison. “Symptoms of Ebola can be similar to that of influenza, malaria and other communicable illnesses, so it is important that staff always ask patients exhibiting symptoms if they have participated in foreign travel routing back to West Africa.”

For more information about Ebola, please visit <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/id-mi/vhf-fvh/ebola-eng.php>.

## **About Eastern Health**

Eastern Health is the largest, integrated health authority in Newfoundland and Labrador employing approximately 13,000 dedicated employees and serving a population of more than 300,000 people. The authority has an annual budget of approximately \$1.3 billion and offers the full continuum of health and community services including public health, long-term care, community services, hospital care and unique provincial programs and services. Its geographic boundaries extend from St. John's west to Port Blandford including all communities on the Avalon, Burin and Bonavista Peninsulas.

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