



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Ebola Preparedness Plan for New York State

ANDREW J LANZA October 17, 2014

Today, New York State's leadership along with regional hospital and healthcare representatives outlined the State's plans for Ebola preparedness and assured New Yorkers that the State is taking every precaution to protect their health and safety. [Eight hospitals statewide](#) have been designated to treat potential patients with Ebola. Additionally, the State Department of Health has issued a Commissioner's Order to all hospitals, diagnostic and treatment centers, and ambulance services in New York State, requiring that they follow protocols for identification, isolation and medical evaluation of patients requiring care. In order to ensure that New York is continuously prepared to safely treat anyone who is exposed to or contracts Ebola, an education session for healthcare workers will be held in New York City on October 21.

The Port Authority will coordinate procedure and practice between all State airports to ensure proper training is in place for airport personnel, and the Port Authority Police Department will be deploying two ambulances per shift at each of its airports to ensure the timely and safe transport of potential patients with Ebola. Additionally, the MTA will work to ensure that its employees have necessary equipment and training to protect themselves as well as subway, bus and commuter railroad customers. As part of the State's preparedness plan, unannounced drills currently occurring at hospitals and health care facilities will be expanded to college campuses as well as subway and mass transit areas. State agencies will continue to work together and make adjustments as necessary in the weeks and months to come in order to best protect New Yorkers.

New York State's Ebola plan calls for eight hospitals statewide to handle all patients diagnosed with Ebola, with plans to designate additional hospitals going forward. The following eight hospitals have agreed to the designation and are creating isolation units to accept patients:

- Mt. Sinai in Manhattan
- New York Presbyterian in Manhattan

- Bellevue in Manhattan
- Montefiore in the Bronx
- North Shore/LIJ Health System in Nassau County
- Upstate University Hospital in Syracuse
- University of Rochester Medical Center in Rochester
- Stony Brook University Hospital on Long Island

Various State agencies and authorities are already addressing the threat of Ebola, including:

**Department of Health:** In addition to updating protocols and hosting training exercises, the Department of Health will plan webinars for all hospital epidemiology, infection control and emergency room staff on Ebola. DOH will also draft another alert reiterating guidance about emergency department triage and infection control and take steps to be sure this guidance reaches all parts of the healthcare system, including clinics, urgent care centers, and primary care. DOH will also conduct an electronic survey of all hospitals to query Ebola readiness activities, training, and the availability of personal protective equipment (PPE). DOH regional staff – including personnel from the Office of Public Health’s Epidemiology, Infection Control, and Primary Care and Health Systems Management Offices – will do joint visits to hospitals and other health care settings using a standard check for things like emergency department triage, care plan, PPE, and training.

**Port Authority:** At JFK, in coordination with personnel from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Customs and Border Protection and US Coast Guard, advanced screenings commenced on Saturday using detailed questionnaires for passengers originating in three West African nations. In addition, personnel from the CDC, Customs and Border Protection and the US Public Health Service had a practice drill with the Port Authority Police Department and other Federal, State and local partners on Friday afternoon at JFK for scenarios in which passengers who may have been infected with the virus are handled at JFK. Advanced screening began Saturday at JFK and at this time no passengers at JFK arriving from the three West African nations have been identified as having the Ebola virus.

**Metropolitan Transportation Authority:** The MTA has developed a protocol to keep its employees and customers safe during this time of heightened awareness. This protocol includes ensuring that at-risk employees have appropriate personal protective equipment to guard against infection and are trained in its use, as well as following best practices and recommended standards when cleaning MTA facilities. This protocol was developed in close consultation with the State Department of Health regarding symptoms and likelihood of potential exposure. The MTA has been meeting with

its labor unions this week to discuss this protocol and to make sure it is consistent and thorough in its implementation. The MTA will outline this Ebola virus protocol to customers through messaging throughout the MTA system in the coming days.

**Public Safety:** The Governor's Office of Public Safety is working with New York State Police, the New York State Chiefs and Sheriff's Associations and SUNY Chiefs to coordinate field advise for police officers regarding recommended equipment and procedures to reduce chance of contamination.

**Commissioner's Order:** Acting State Health Commissioner Howard Zucker has issued a Commissioner's Order to all hospitals, diagnostic and treatment centers, and ambulance services in New York State, requiring that they follow protocols for identification, isolation and medical evaluation of patients requiring care, and also mandating that all staff be trained in person in the practice of donning and removing personal protective equipment. The protocols are in place to ensure that New York's hospitals can safely care for and treat patients with Ebola. The Department of Health is also providing guidance to other healthcare professionals and facilities on the proper management of people with potential exposure to Ebola. The Commissioner's Order can be viewed [HERE](#).

More information about Ebola – including answers to common questions and links to other resources on the disease – is available [HERE](#).

**Training for Health Care Workers:** Next week, the State Department of Health will join representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Greater New York Hospital Association, 1199 SEIU and the Partnership for Quality Care for an Ebola education session for health care workers. The event will include national and New York City-area infection control experts, and a hands-on demonstration of wearing and removing equipment. The training will take place on Tuesday, October 21 from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Javits Center in New York City.

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