

OPINION

LETTERS POLICY

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OTHER VIEW | CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Ebola: Don't be scared. Be careful.

Federal officials announced Tuesday that a passenger who flew from Liberia to Dallas last month had become the first person to be diagnosed with Ebola in the U.S. On Wednesday came word that health officials are monitoring several more people for signs of illness, including five school children who had contact with the first Ebola patient.

Yes, that is frightening. Ebola is deadly. There is no cure or vaccine. The Dallas case - or cases - probably won't be the last. This lethal virus has swept through West Africa and an ocean's expanse is no shield in the age of jetliners.

Scary as it is, however, this unfolding story also should reassure Americans how swiftly and effectively U.S. public health workers can move to contain a deadly virus: Workers are tracking those who came in contact with the patient, who was diagnosed with Ebola several days after he arrived in Texas to visit family members.

The patient showed no signs of the disease - fever, nausea and vomiting - before he boarded the plane or while he was en route. There's "zero chance" that he infected other passengers, says Dr. Thomas Frieden, director of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, because he showed no signs of infection on the flight. Unlike other viruses, Ebola spreads mainly via bodily fluids, not through the air.

America's public health system has had plenty of time to prepare for this threat. Medical and hospital workers have drilled for wide-scale medical disasters since 9/11. They're adept at identifying and isolating victims, tracking others who may have been exposed and educating everyone about common-sense measures they can take to stay healthy.

That's why it is difficult for an epidemic to take hold in this country. Every few years brings another scare: In 2009, it was the H1N1 flu.

Before that, the viral respiratory disease known as SARS. Each threat provokes an overwhelming medical immune response - legions of doctors, nurses, researchers and outreach workers

target the intruder. Treatments are refined. Drugs are marshaled. Vaccines, if available, are rushed to clinics.

So how can Americans reduce their risk of exposure? You've heard this advice before. From your mom. A thousand times. Wash your hands. Don't touch your face. (The average adult touches his nose, mouth or eyes about 16 times an hour, researchers say.)

University of Arizona researchers showed how quickly a virus can race through the office: A door contaminated with a virus spreads the germ to about half of the employees in an office in four hours, The Wall Street Journal reports. "The hand is quicker than the sneeze," a microbiology professor told the paper.

Ebola doesn't infect people through the air, but it remains a swift foe.

The virus has burned through West Africa, killing thousands. Left unchecked it could infect more than 1 million people in that region by January, CDC officials recently predicted. But that is the worst-case scenario. It needn't be prophetic.

Four American doctors and aid workers airlifted out of Africa to receive treatment in the U.S. have survived.

That's an excellent batting average against a virus that is lethal in Africa about half the time. The Dallas patient's condition has been upgraded to serious but stable from critical.

The CDC also reports that quick, effective action by doctors and other health workers in Nigeria has apparently brought an outbreak under control, with no new cases reported in more than 21 days.

At the same time, global efforts to battle the virus have picked up steam. President Barack Obama has wisely pledged more American aid to help build hospitals in West Africa. Other donors around the world need to step up, too.

Ebola in Dallas can quickly be followed by Ebola in Moscow, Riyadh, Paris, Beijing, Rome or Sao Paulo.

The Ebola epidemic will end. All of us can help determine when.

POLITICS | SEN. TOM O'MARA

Ready to say 'welcome back'



TOM O'MARA

Here's a key question that deserves to drive public policy in the immediate future: are we entering a period of time when more and more American manufacturing jobs will be coming back home? After a decades-long era when an overriding economic reality was "outsourcing" - years when so many U.S. companies moved so many good jobs overseas to take advantage of lower labor and operating costs, and other economic benefits - will these same companies now begin "reshoring" these jobs?

That's what some economists call it, "reshoring." As labor and related costs continue to rise in China and other Asian nations, American producers are returning to our shores. They're hiring American workers again while enjoying cost benefits such as abundant and low-cost energy thanks to the emergence of domestic natural gas production, lower transportation costs, and stronger corporate protections against counterfeiting, piracy and the like.

According to a few economists tracking this reshoring phenomenon, outsourcing jobs dropped by roughly 70 percent during the decade between 2003 and last year. They don't appear to be arguing that lost manufacturing jobs are returning in droves, mind you, but it does at least signal a positive new trend. It does appear that there's at least some hope out there for building a new, encouraging refrain across

the nation: let's manufacture it, again, here at home in the U.S.A.

At the moment it seems a relatively small blip on the economic recovery radar screen. But if the trend keeps moving in our favor -- and I for one hope that it will -- it poses a critical question for New York State, and our region. If in fact reshoring signals the long-term future of American manufacturing, if it's a sign of something bigger, then we need to be asking if we're doing enough to encourage it and, more to the point, take advantage of it.

There are numerous, complex factors involved in shifting the trends of the global economy. It's no easy task to attract, rebuild or retain a manufacturing base like the one we used to enjoy across the Southern Tier. No potential homecoming's going to come easy. But we at least should be ready for the chance. We should be ready to attract and seize every new manufacturing reshoring opportunity that comes our way, as well as reclaim old manufacturing strongholds.

And as we continue to work to reinvent and sustain the local economy, we need to keep working hand in hand with local

employers, and educators, to help our young people take advantage of emerging job opportunities, especially in science, technology and, yes, manufacturing. Think of it as modern-day piecemeal, whereby every community institution, from parents to schools to the work place, adds another key part to an ultimately strong, high-quality end product.

Consider the following words from GE Healthcare's chief economist, "While factors like wage rates and foreign exchange rates can change over time, high-paying manufacturing jobs tend to follow a skilled, creative work force. Our success...is a great example of how innovation, supported by strong teaching institutions and local governments, can translate into good-paying manufacturing jobs."

Reading that, I immediately thought of the recent groundbreaking at Corning Community College. It's exactly the kind of initiative and vision that could help fuel and further ignite reshoring opportunities.

For anyone who missed it, CCC just broke ground at its Elmira campus for a facility to house a new education and training program to address the local demand for welders. It's going to benefit numerous, existing regional manufacturers, and it sets in motion the creation of a foundation of good jobs for skilled, local workers that, in turn, will be attractive to future businesses and industries.

It's the perfect example

of an academic-business-government triangle that can identify a local need, summon the resources to address it, and create an economic strength.

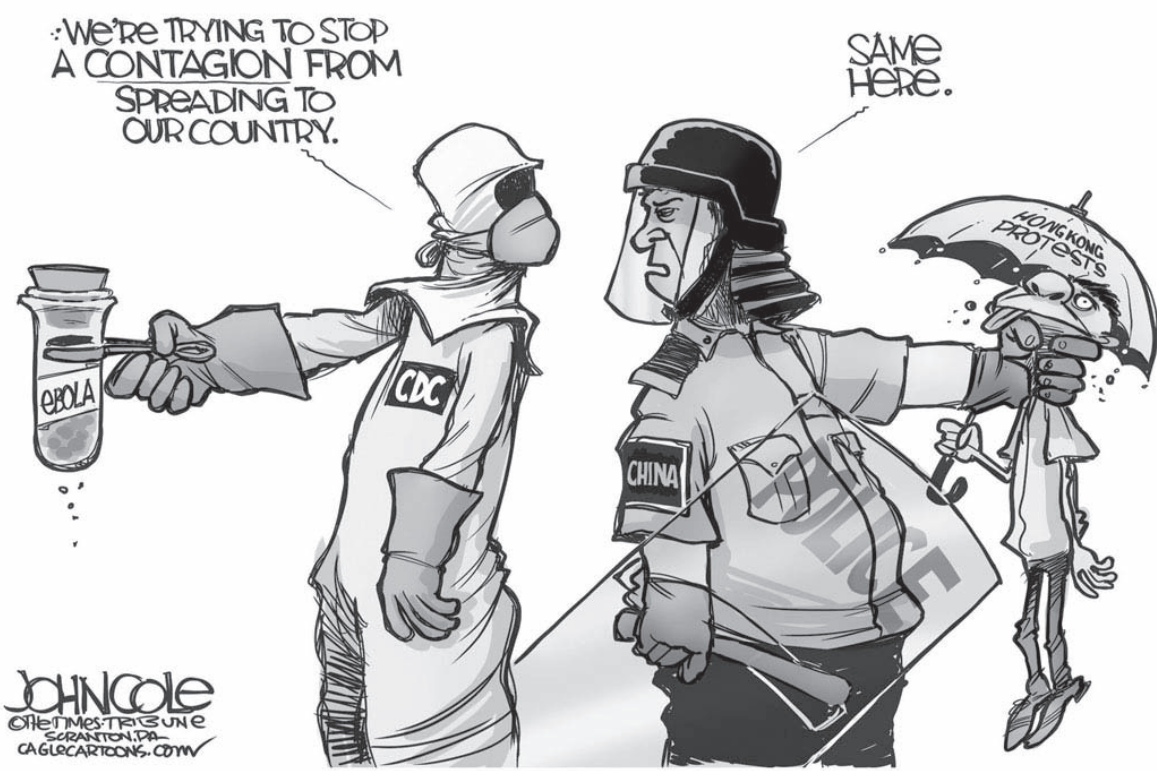
So: Is New York government doing everything it can to help our state attract new reshoring opportunities? We talk endlessly about the obstacles still in the way, especially high taxes and overregulation. But the discussion must also include, for example, the need for educational systems more in tune with the demands of the modern economy, providing high-tech retraining for workers, and enhanced broadband and transportation infrastructures.

There's no shortage of good ideas, and good efforts underway. The Southern Tier and Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Councils continue to advance comprehensive blueprints containing a strong manufacturing component (you can read these plans at www.nyworks.ny.gov).

In short, we cannot turn our back on the manufacturing sector. Quite the opposite, in fact. The reshoring phenomenon identifies the need to be ready to say, "Welcome back."

State Sen. Tom O'Mara, R-Big Flats, represents New York's 58th Senate District, which includes Steuben, Chemung, Schuyler and Yates counties, and part of Tompkins County.

ANOTHER VIEW



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Politicians need to trust CDC, science

TO THE EDITOR | Now that Ebola has come to the United States, we are beginning to see a clear demonstration of the folly of politicians who tell their followers not to trust the government and not to trust science. This is a case where the chickens come home to roost.

These same politicians and their followers (along with the rest of the American people) will now desperately need to trust and rely on the expertise of the Centers for Disease Control (a government agency staffed with scientists).

A CDC team is currently being flown to Texas to

help after they apparently totally dropped the ball with a Liberian man who arrived in Dallas with Ebola.

One might hope that an experience like this would temper such dangerous and cynical foolishness designed only to gain political advantage, but my guess is that the talking points of these so-called conservative politicians will continue unabated.

Gary P. Brown,
Hammondsport

Can't afford to pay library tax

TO THE EDITOR | To all concerned citizens, here it is a year later and the same issue being put

to the voters again: The Southeast Steuben County Library vote.

In an area where the taxes are so high that some people are having to work two jobs to pay present taxes and now the powers that be want to add to that burden. The library could earn money by making people pay for the use of the Internet/computers. Especially the one that sit for hours to watch porn. I don't know about others but I object to paying for someone to do that. Internet is especially expensive, I know because in order to have it, I have to give up something else.

Some don't just vote, some because they forget - well do what I do ... put

a sign on the most-used door in your home to remind you. Some others just don't care, and a small faction don't vote because they can afford the higher taxes. Well I say it is time to end this voting every year. Please vote, we can't afford higher taxes. There are a lot of people on Social Security, as I am, and cannot afford higher taxes. Please get out and vote no on Tuesday, Oct. 21 from 11 a.m.-8 p.m. If you need a ride, call a neighbor or call me, I'm in the book.

Hope to see all voters at the polls.

Irene M. Doyle, Caton
Ed. note | The deadline for letters regarding the library vote is Oct. 15.

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