



Dear Colleagues,

I just returned from West Africa and am deeply alarmed by the sharp acceleration of the spread of Ebola. It is a crisis, and urgent action is needed. I have called on U.S. and world leaders to immediately increase widespread material support, expertise, and frontline attention to stop the spread of this epidemic. At the same time, I was able to witness firsthand the tremendous work CDC staff are doing in each country—along with the extraordinary efforts of the local heroes who are the foot soldiers in the Ebola battle. Together, they have saved lives, and they continue to work hard to slow the epidemic.

CDC is also committed to preventing Ebola from spreading to our shores. As of September 9, 2014, no confirmed Ebola cases have been reported in the United States. CDC has received many calls from health departments and hospitals about suspected Ebola cases in travelers from the affected countries. These calls have been triaged appropriately, with some samples being sent to CDC for testing. All samples sent to CDC have thus far been negative.

As an additional preparedness measure, CDC has established capacity for testing specimens through the Laboratory Response Network—Biological (LRN-B). Select LRN-B laboratories have been approved to complete Ebola testing in their facilities, providing national coverage for laboratory services. Guidance was distributed by the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) and is available on the secure LRN site. CDC's State Coordination Task Force is working closely with the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists, APHL, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, and National Association of County and City Health Officials to ensure our public health system is prepared to respond. We are also communicating with American health care workers about how to detect and isolate patients who may have Ebola and how they can protect themselves from infection.

In response to your requests, CDC has expanded clinical and public health guidance to cover a wide range of health care, laboratory, and other settings—and more resources are coming soon. In particular, we will soon release the top 10 planning tips to help state and local health officials assess and improve their jurisdictions' readiness for a potential Ebola response. You can find Ebola-related clinical, laboratory, epidemiologic, and communication resources at www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola. Senior health officials who need assistance with Ebola-related issues can contact the State Coordination Task Force directly at eocsctfecdesk@cdc.gov.

As CDC works to fight this outbreak internationally, our state and local health departments are instrumental in protecting the American public. Some CDC field assignees have been deployed to West Africa or back to CDC headquarters to assist with response efforts, and we sincerely appreciate your support of these important activities. Thank you for your dedication and responsiveness in addressing this unprecedented epidemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas R. Frieden".

Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH
Director, CDC