MEMORANDUM

TO: UNC Charlotte Faculty and Staff
FROM: Pandemic Incident Management Team
DATE: November 24, 2014
SUBJECT: Planning and Preparation Efforts and Travel Restrictions in Response to the Ebola Outbreak

Planning and Preparation Efforts

Over the past few months, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte has been closely monitoring a number of communicable disease outbreaks across the world. This includes the current outbreak of Ebola in West Africa. UNC Charlotte is keeping abreast of guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), and state and local public health agencies. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has provided extensive guidance to healthcare officials across the state and is continually monitoring for cases of Ebola.

Currently, the CDC has stated that the Ebola outbreak does not pose a significant threat to the United States, but a Level 3 travel warning (the highest level of warning) has been issued for Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea. The CDC has advised universities to postpone education-related travel to those countries. Within the UNC system, both UNC Chapel Hill and NC State have imposed travel restrictions to these countries. In addition, the CDC has issued a Level 2 travel alert for Mali. Please keep in mind that, as the situation changes, countries may be added to or subtracted from this list.

At the request of the Chancellor, UNC Charlotte has gathered representation from a number of key university departments to serve on the Pandemic Incident Management Team. This team has remained in constant contact concerning travel restrictions to the most impacted countries, has discussed campus response plans, and has coordinated with local public health agencies and other healthcare partners.

Travel Restrictions

Although concerns within the continental U.S. with respect to known Ebola cases have subsided, significant international concerns continue in West Africa. Accordingly, in light of the upcoming holiday season and given the continuing risks associated with international travel to West Africa, the Chancellor has directed as follows:

1. University-sponsored travel to or through countries with a CDC Level 3 travel warning (currently Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia) is prohibited for all students, faculty, and staff. Travel to any of these three countries will not be reimbursed regardless of the funding entity.

2. Pursuant to University Policy 602.7, Travel Authorization and Reimbursement, University-sponsored travel will be reimbursed only if pre-authorized via the completion of a Travel Authorization form (employee or non-employee, as applicable), signed by the appropriate departmental supervisor. Individuals who intend to engage in University-sponsored international travel must submit their Travel Authorization form to the Travel Office at least two weeks in advance of international travel.
3. Students, faculty, and staff are strongly discouraged from engaging in personal travel to or through countries with a CDC Level 3 travel warning. Anyone considering personal, international travel to a country with a CDC Level 3 or Level 2 travel alert (currently, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, and Mali) should register with the Travel Office by emailing travel@uncc.edu. In the email, the traveler should identify that the travel is personal (not university-sponsored).

Students, faculty, and staff who are accepting visitors from any country with a CDC Level 3 travel warning, or anyone with a likely risk of exposure, are also being asked to report this information to the University's Student Health Center in order to receive guidance on how to monitor for possible infection and prevent the spread of communicable disease.

Students, faculty, or staff members returning from or having recently traveled through any country with a Level 3 CDC warning and any student, faculty, or staff member who has reason to believe that s/he has been exposed to someone with Ebola should submit to a screening with the local public health department prior to returning to campus. The local public health department and/or the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS) will decide whether any isolation of that individual for any period of time is required.

These procedures have been implemented in order to best protect the entire UNC Charlotte community. If you are planning to travel to or through any country with a Level 2 or 3 CDC warning, or other affected area, please be mindful of your responsibility to help ensure the safety of our campus and follow the guidelines identified above.

Additional Information

The Pandemic Incident Management Team has launched and will continually update an Ebola informational webpage on the Office of Business Continuity’s website. This page includes general information and an overview of Ebola, CDC and WHO guidance and restrictions, frequently asked questions, as well as links to our jurisdictional partners. The page is located at http://bcp.uncc.edu. More information can be found on the CDC website at www.cdc.gov. NC DHHS has also set up a public information line at 1-800-222-1222 (option 6) and a website at http://www.ncdhhs.gov/ebola.

Dr. Robert Jones, Medical Director of the Student Health Center, was the guest on the Oct. 30, 2014 edition of "The Live Wire," Inside UNC Charlotte’s streaming webcast. He offered several guiding thoughts on Ebola and the various concerns related to the virus.

Questions and concerns should be forwarded to the Director of Business Continuity and Emergency Management Planning, Chris Gonyar.

---

1 University faculty or staff who wish to petition for approval to travel to these countries for humanitarian or scientific/clinical purposes related to the Ebola response must seek explicit, advance approval from first the dean of their school, and subsequently from the Office of the Provost. If such a petition is granted by both individuals, the travel may be contingent upon agreed upon protocols and restrictions.