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Media Statement

Santa Clara County Public Health Department Ebola Preparedness

The Santa Clara County Public Health Department (PHD) is preparing for the unlikely event that a person with Ebola comes into our community. The leadership and employees of PHD understand the community's concern about this disease. If a suspected case should happen here, systems are in place to ensure a quick response from the department and medical community so that public safety can be maintained.

Since August, PHD has been preparing, and will continue to prepare for Ebola. To date, PHD has:

- Issued Health Advisories to the Santa Clara County healthcare community. These communications promote awareness around the current situation, provide guidance from the CDC and the California Department of Public Health and share infection control recommendations.
- Participated on both CDC and California Department of Public Health conference calls regarding Ebola.
- Shared information with local clinicians to help them recognize a potential Ebola case.
- Shared information with County of Santa Clara and PHD employees about Ebola and the department's planning and preparedness activities.
- Scheduled regular communication with local hospitals. Hospitals are actively preparing to safely care for an Ebola case. Their preparedness activities include drills, trainings, and the development of protocols and plans.
- Produced PDF of tri-lingual signs and posters for local Emergency Departments that instruct patients on what to do if they have recently traveled from Sierra Leone, Liberia, or Guinea, and if they have symptoms of Ebola. Also produced PDF of a poster for hospital and clinic staff reminding them of Ebola screening protocols.
- Established an Ebola webpage on the PHD website and used Social Media to provide accurate information to the general public.
- Collaborated with the Santa Clara County Office of Education (COE) to provide a letter for school districts updating parents about the situation of Ebola and Enterovirus-D68. The letter was translated into Spanish and Vietnamese.
- The Emergency Medical Services Agency has developed and implemented protocols and policies to rapidly identify patients at risk for Ebola; notify the County Health Officer and receiving hospital of an suspected Ebola patient; and the use of personal protective equipment to protect fire department and ambulance personnel and safely transport and treat suspected Ebola patients.

- Scheduled meetings with first responder leadership and airport officials regarding the identification and transportation of a suspected Ebola patient.

The health care community regularly communicates with Santa Clara County Public Health Department on reportable diseases. If Ebola were suspected here, it would be reported to PHD immediately. Disease reporting to PHD of urgent communicable disease issues is facilitated by 24-hour coverage by a Health Officer.

With heightened media coverage of the Ebola outbreak, it is only natural to feel anxious. But it is important to know the facts:

- There is no Ebola in Santa Clara County or California.
- Ebola can only be spread by a person who is sick and has symptoms of the disease. The disease is spread by direct contact with a sick person's body fluids.
- The Santa Clara County Public Health Department has been, and continues to prepare for the unlikely chance that a person in Santa Clara County becomes sick with Ebola.

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