STATE OF WISCONSIN COORDINATES WITH HEALTH SYSTEMS TO PROVIDE CARE IN THE EVENT OF A CONFIRMED EBOLA DIAGNOSIS

Three health systems designated to ensure safety and appropriate treatment

MADISON—The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) today announced that it is collaborating with three Wisconsin health systems to care for patients with a confirmed diagnosis of Ebola. Even though Ebola has not been diagnosed in Wisconsin and the risk of contracting it remains very low, if a case of Ebola is confirmed, DHS will work with the medical team caring for the patient to transfer them to one of the following designated hospitals:

- UW Health – University of Wisconsin Hospital, Madison, and the American Family Children’s Hospital, Madison (for pediatric patients only)
- Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin – Froedtert Hospital, Milwaukee
- Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin, Milwaukee (for pediatric patients only)

“This is an important piece of the state’s overall coordinated strategy of Ebola preparedness. All health systems are continuing to prepare to identify, isolate, and provide initial care for any patients with Ebola. Because of the specialized care available at the designated hospitals, and because of their demonstrated preparedness, these designated health systems have agreed to be centers of excellence and will safely provide treatment for confirmed cases,” said Karen McKeown, State Health Officer. “We asked these organizations to volunteer because we feel they have plans in place that will increase the odds of recovery for patients diagnosed with the disease. These systems are prepared to safely treat these patients and prevent the spread of Ebola. We expect that additional systems may join this group.”

Ebola has not been diagnosed in Wisconsin and the risk of Ebola remains very low. People can only get Ebola by direct contact with the body fluids of someone who has the disease and is showing symptoms of being ill. In the event that Ebola is diagnosed in Wisconsin, DHS will work with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to notify the public. The health systems that have volunteered to care for confirmed Ebola patients are able to safely do so without interrupting their normal patient care activities.

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Individuals who are concerned about their own health risk should call their usual health care provider or call 1-844-684-1064, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There is also information posted on the DHS website at www.dhs.wisconsin.gov. Patients will be transferred to designated hospitals only after approval from DHS.

“Although we know the likelihood of an Ebola patient in Wisconsin remains low, we're confident that the policies and training put into place at UW Health over the last few weeks will ensure the best care possible if a patient does present, while maintaining a safe environment for our providers and patients,” said Dr. Jonathan Jaffery, Chief Population Health Officer at UW Health. “While we hope to never have to implement these policies, we continue to train and prepare on a daily basis.”

“We are grateful to the DHS for organizing a coordinated, thoughtful response plan that involves the capabilities of several excellent Wisconsin hospitals. As an academic medical center, Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin Froedtert Hospital, has expertise in treating complex conditions and illnesses, and we are trained and prepared to safely care for all of our patients,” said Sid Singh, MD, Associate Chief Medical Officer at Froedtert Hospital.

“Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin has already prepared a comprehensive plan, including screening, training, treatment, isolation and protection, in order to safely handle the possibility, however unlikely, of a child being diagnosed with the Ebola virus. As the state’s only independent health system dedicated solely to the care of kids, we appreciate the opportunity to coordinate with the State of Wisconsin, local health departments and other health care systems to ensure that all kids who visit Children’s Hospital receive the best and safest care.” Michael Gutzeit, M.D., Chief Medical Officer, Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin.

“Wisconsin's hospitals care for all those in need, and WHA commends the care givers and leaders of Froedtert Health, UW Hospitals and Clinics and Children's Hospital of Wisconsin; three exemplary Wisconsin health systems stepping forward to take on this critical role,” said Wisconsin Hospital Association President Steve Brenton. “WHA and our members are committed to working with state leaders to assure the safety of our care givers, that high quality care is available to those in need, and Wisconsin is prepared to meet whatever challenge may arise.”

For more information about Ebola and Wisconsin’s preparedness efforts, visit: http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/diseasepages/ebola.htm

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