University update on Ebola
From the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
August 21, 2014

As we welcome new and returning students, faculty and staff to campus for the fall 2014 semester we are reminded of the many individuals on campus that travel abroad, visit SDSU from other countries and come here to study and further their education. We are especially aware of the recent West African outbreak of the Ebola virus and that this could impact the health of our community here at South Dakota State University. The Ebola virus is a severe illness in humans and has recently impacted three West African nations: Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) continue to monitor and respond to the Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa and according to the CDC, Ebola currently poses no significant threat in the United States.

Additionally, South Dakota State University has no university-sponsored trips where students or faculty are coming to campus from these affected areas. There are no university-sponsored study abroad trips in the affected areas and the federal government has not issued travel bans to these areas. If anyone does arrive from the affected areas they will receive information about how they should monitor their health during the next few weeks.

Persons at risk and virus transmission

Those at risk are anyone who has traveled to West Africa in the past three weeks separate from anything sponsored by the university, and/or believes they were in contact with body fluids of someone ill with Ebola. Body fluids include blood, sweat, urine, feces, saliva and possibly nasal secretions if close to the infected person. The virus cannot be transmitted through the air, through water or through food. It can only be transmitted through fluids of an infected person or from exposure to contaminated objects – such as needles.

How to monitor for symptoms and when to seek health care

Any person with recent international travel to affected areas separate from university-sponsored travel should monitor their health status for three weeks after arrival from West Africa. Taking your temperature once or twice daily might be helpful. If you have traveled to West Africa and develop sudden fever, chills, muscle aches, severe diarrhea, vomiting, rash or other symptoms consistent with Ebola, you should seek immediate medical attention.
Before visiting a health-care provider, alert the clinic or emergency room in advance about your possible exposure to Ebola virus so that arrangements can be made to prevent spreading it to others. When traveling to a health-care provider, limit contact with other people and avoid all other travel.

**Ways to prevent illness**

Ebola virus is transmitted by close contact of the body fluids of a person who has symptoms of Ebola. Treat any body fluid as though it is infectious. Blood or body fluids can spread Ebola if they get into your eyes, nose or mouth. Therefore, hand washing is the most important infection-control measure, along with avoiding hand contact to one’s face. Wear disposable impermeable gloves when cleaning visibly contaminated surfaces. Maintain good healthy practices like getting plenty of sleep, maintaining good nutrition, drinking plenty of water and increasing your physical activity to help your immune system best resist infections.

**Convenient Campus Resources**

Students may contact the SDSU Student Health Clinic with additional questions at

http://www.sdstate.edu/wellness-center/clinic/index.cfm

To set up an appointment: 605-688-4157

After Hours Resources:

Avera Ask-A-Nurse 800-658-3535
Sanford Health 800-445-5788 or 605-333-4444

**Additional Resources and Information**

American College Health Association
http://achablog.weebly.com/acha-blog/being-prepared

Brookings Health Systems
http://brookingshealth.org/

Centers for Disease Control
http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/about.html