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**LAKE COUNTY GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT AND LAKE HEALTH
PREPARED TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC DURING AN EBOLA OUTBREAK**

Lake County General Health District (LCGHD), other local regional health departments and Lake Health have been receiving updates and guidance on Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and are preparing to be ready to respond should there ever be a case in Northeast Ohio. Currently, EVD is of little threat to people living in the United States. Health Commissioner Frank Kellogg commented, “While the risk to our residents is very low, it is always better to prepare so that we can appropriately identify and care for suspect cases and work with the community to prevent further illness.”

To that end, Lake Health has a comprehensive infection prevention and surveillance plan in place. “Our health care workers at all facilities are prepared to identify a possible Ebola patient and respond to protect that patient, our staff and the community,” said David Hutt, MD, infection control specialist for Lake Health. All Lake Health staff are knowledgeable about the early signs and symptoms of EVD and prepared to initiate infection prevention practices outlined by the CDC, including placing the patient in isolation, wearing personal protective equipment, restricting visitors. Housekeeping staff is equipped with the proper cleaning and disinfectant products to ensure the patient environment is clean.

With the outbreak likely to continue for months in West African countries, though, LCGHD is making the following preparations:

- Contacting Lake County organizations and the religious community who may travel and/or work with individuals from West African countries to make them aware of the threat and show them where they can get more information;
- Partnering with the local hospitals and physicians’ offices, as well as key federal and state agencies to monitor for infectious diseases, including Ebola, and make sure that patients are cared for and health care staff are protected; and
- Performing outreach and education in the community to raise awareness about Ebola, its causes and how to prevent its spread.

EVD is a serious illness that is spread when a person comes in contact with the body fluids (blood, urine, stool, vomit, saliva, sweat, semen or breast milk) of someone who is sick with the disease. Ebola is not spread through the air or through water.

Currently, the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not have an approved vaccine for Ebola. The best way to protect yourself from getting Ebola is to avoid traveling to areas where Ebola is prevalent, including West Africa. While there are currently no cases of Ebola in northeast Ohio, good prevention includes washing your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and avoiding contact with blood and body fluids. These actions help to protect against all disease, including Ebola.

For more information on Ebola, visit the CDC's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/> and the Lake County General Health District's website at lcghd.org.

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