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## Public Update on Ebola Preparedness

(Santa Ana, CA) — Emergency planning is well underway in Orange County in response to the 2014 Ebola outbreak in the West African countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The risk of contracting Ebola in the United States and in Orange County is very low; there are currently no cases of Ebola in California and no suspect cases. County officials are reviewing communicable disease response plans and conducting drills to exercise those plans.

County officials have developed extensive preparedness procedures in coordination with other local, state and national partners, including the Orange County Health Care Agency, Orange County Sheriff's Department and its Emergency Management Division, John Wayne Airport, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Los Angeles County Public Health Lab, which is a CDC-designated site with the capability to test for Ebola.

"Health and public safety are our first priority and we are prepared to respond if necessary," Board of Supervisors Chairman Shawn Nelson said.

In the event of a case in Orange County, the county's emergency operations plan will be used to ensure a coordinated approach to monitoring and limiting the spread of the disease. The Health Care Agency routinely works closely with hospitals, health care providers, law enforcement and other government entities to ensure that Orange County is well prepared for any public health threat, including Ebola.

Ongoing Ebola readiness activities include:

- Assessing hospitals on infection control and preparedness.
- Conducting training exercises, including demonstrating patient care protocols, and appropriate use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Establishing contracts for specialty hazardous-waste needs such as transport of laboratory specimens.
- Distributing information to hospitals, clinics, laboratories and health-care providers on CDC screening protocols and management of suspected and confirmed Ebola patients.
- Assuring that county health workers have protective equipment and proper training as recommended by the CDC.

Additional information about Ebola is available on the Health Care Agency website at <http://www.ochealthinfo.com/ebola>. The California Department of Public Health has established an Ebola hotline call center to respond to public inquiries related to Ebola at **855-421-5921** from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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