Health Information Regarding Ebola Outbreak in West Africa

August 27, 2014

The recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa is a worldwide concern, but at this time we do not anticipate any risk within the Bentley community. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health issued an advisory which stated - “The likelihood of the arrival of someone into Massachusetts with hemorrhagic fever due to Ebola virus disease (EVD) is very low, and the potential for transmission in the United States to be even lower”. The Center for Health and Wellness has been in communication with the Massachusetts Public Health Department, area health officials, and Newton Wellesley Hospital to monitor the situation to take precautions to ensure the health and safety of our community. The following are frequently asked questions about Ebola.

What is Ebola?

Ebola is caused by a virus that was discovered in 1976 near the Ebola River in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It affects humans and non-human primates, such as chimps, gorillas, and monkeys. There have been a number of outbreaks since it was first identified. The current outbreak has been going on in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, with a few cases recently developing in the country of Nigeria.

How is Ebola Transmitted?

Ebola cannot be transmitted through air, water or food. It cannot be spread by someone coughing or sneezing on you. It can only spread person to person through direct contact of mucous membranes or broken skin with bodily fluids, blood or needles contaminated with infected bodily fluids.

What are the symptoms of Ebola?

Symptoms begin abruptly with headache, fever, body aches and fatigue, diarrhea, vomiting and bleeding and bruising. Symptoms usually occur 8-10 days after exposure but can appear as long as 21 days afterwards.

What is the risk of contracting Ebola at Bentley?

We have no students on study abroad in the affected countries. We have been in contact with the few Bentley students who come from West African countries and have found no students who present any risk to our community.

Should travel to West Africa be cancelled?

The CDC has advised against any non-essential travel to the Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia and recommended that precautions be taken with travel to Nigeria. There are no study abroad programs planned for students to go to these countries for the Fall semester.

How will I get updates?

If there is new information, all students, faculty and staff will receive an email and the website will be updated as well.