



February 17, 2015

Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for your tremendous ongoing efforts to prepare our nation's health care system to safely identify and care for patients with Ebola virus disease (Ebola). Before the current Ebola outbreak began in West Africa, there were three facilities in the United States recognized for their biocontainment capability to treat highly contagious or poorly understood infectious diseases. Early on, these facilities—Emory University Hospital, the University of Nebraska Medical Center, and the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center—came forward and cared for health care workers with Ebola who were medevaced from West Africa.

Since then, state health departments, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) have worked in partnership with hospitals to bolster U.S. health care system preparedness for Ebola. These efforts included strengthening infection control, filling gaps in the availability of personal protective equipment, and addressing other complex issues, such as the configuration of physical space and waste management protocols.

As a result, there are currently 55 Ebola treatment centers in the United States that have been visited by a CDC Rapid Ebola Preparedness team and designated publicly by the state health department as ready and willing to treat an Ebola patient. More than 80 percent of travelers returning from West Africa are now within 200 miles of an Ebola treatment center and could be safely transported via ambulance, if necessary. Medevac capacity is available for other returning travelers.

We believe the current number of Ebola treatment centers is sufficient to care for Ebola patients through the full course of their treatment in any plausible scenario. Therefore, as of February 14, 2015, we are no longer adding additional Ebola treatment centers to the list maintained on CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/healthcare-us/preparing/current-treatment-centers.html.

Within the next two weeks, ASPR's Hospital Preparedness Program will release its funding opportunity announcement (FOA). The FOA will offer guidance on building and funding your state or jurisdiction's tiered approach for health care system preparedness for Ebola. It will also provide guidance and funding for a regional strategy for the treatment of Ebola and other special pathogens. Awardees will have substantial discretion to use the funding in a way that is best suited to meet the unique needs of their state or jurisdiction.

Thank you again for your dedication and partnership to strengthening our nation's Ebola preparedness and resilience.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Nicole Lurie in blue ink.

Nicole Lurie, M.D. M.S.P.H.
Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response

Handwritten signature of Thomas R. Frieden in blue ink.

Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH
Director, CDC