First U.S. Case of Ebola in Dallas

On September 30, 2014, DCHHS received confirmation of a positive Ebola case from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This Ebola case in Dallas County is the first one ever diagnosed in the United States.

Labs from both CDC and Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) performed tests.

Prior to receiving confirmation, DCHHS began its public health follow-up by identifying people who came in contact with the patient who traveled from Liberia, West Africa before becoming ill with Ebola-like symptoms.

“The public health follow-up is the most crucial part of any contact investigation, whether it is tuberculosis, HIV, or Ebola,” said Zachary Thompson, DCHHS director. “The fact that our epidemiology team hit the ground running after receiving news of a possible case is noteworthy.”

Contact investigations involve identifying everyone who came in contact with a confirmed case, notifying them of their risk, providing them with education on the disease and how they can stop the disease from spreading.

In the Ebola case, the initial contact list was over 80, then potentially 100, and finally 48.

“It’s important to identify everyone who had even the most brief contact with the patient, then we can start ruling them out based on risk level,” said Dr. Christopher Perkins, DCHHS medical director/health authority.

“Anyone with definite exposure must undergo symptom checks twice daily for 21 days after exposure, and those with possible exposure are considered low risk, urged to watch their symptoms closely, and seek medical attention right away.”

Our team will leave no stone unturned, Dr. Perkins added.

In addition to public health follow-ups, DCHHS has done a number of other things in the Dallas Ebola response, including:

- Publishing Ebola information on the DCHHS website
- Activating the Public Health Operations Center with a call center for the public
- Pushing out information and education to local partners throughout Dallas County
- Participating in ongoing communication with DSHS, CDC, and the public

More information on Ebola can be found at: www.dallascounty.org/department/hhs/ebola.

DCHHSS leaders attend town halls

Dallas County Commissioner Dr. Theresa Daniel recently held a series of town hall meetings for constituents in her district. DCHHS leaders attended each meeting to update citizens on West Nile and Chikungunya viruses in Dallas County.

Director Zachary Thompson spoke about the differences between the two viruses including transmission, symptoms, and treatment. Thompson gave an update on how many residents had been diagnosed with either virus and the number of mosquito pools which had been identified positive for West Nile virus.

Assistant Director of Environmental Health Anthony Jenkins told residents about Dallas County mosquito control. Jenkins explained: detection through surveillance and epidemiology; prevention through personal protection and public awareness; and control through source reduction, larvicide, and adulticide.

“A lot of citizens may be unaware of what goes into mosquito control operations,” said Jenkins. “It’s always a pleasure to explain how DCHHS and our municipalities work diligently to protect residents from mosquito-borne viruses.”

Jenkins added residents should remember their part in prevention - The 4Ds: DEET, Dress, Drain, and Dusk/Dawn.

Left to Right: DCHHS Assistant Director of Environmental Health Anthony Jenkins; Dallas City Councilmember Sheffi Kadane; Dallas County Commissioner Dr. Theresa Daniel; DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson.
DCHHS one of many campaigning for vaccine awareness

It’s flu season and many organizations in Texas are rallying together to spread the message of Vaccinate Texas: “Get a Flu Shot.” DCHHS is on board with more than 20 groups to get the word out.

The goals of Vaccinate Texas are to:
- Increase influenza immunization rates throughout Texas
- Increase flu awareness, potential risk factors, and the importance of immunizations
- Enhance community access to immunization services
- Increase adult routine and recommended rates; use the flu shot opportunity to screen for and administer other needed immunizations
- Decrease total healthcare costs in Texas

Vaccinate Texas is designed to bring together public and private sector entities throughout Texas to make communities stronger and healthier.

2014 Vaccinate Texas Partners

- Dallas County Health and Human Services
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- U.S. HHS Office of Minority Health
- Texas State Health Services – Immunization Branch
- The Immunization Partnership
- The Dallas/Fort Worth Hospital Council
- DCT LiveWell
- University of North Texas College of Pharmacy
- Texas Tech University – Amarillo, Lubbock, Abilene, Dallas
- Texas Health Resources
- Children's Medical Center
- Tarrant County Public Health
- Denton County Public Health
- Texas/Oklahoma AIDS Education & Training Center
- Pharmacy Choice & Access Now
- Cook Children's Healthcare System
- Tenet Healthcare Corporation
- USMD, Inc.
- Age Well Live Well, Dallas
- Medical Center Arlington
- Starbucks
- Walgreens Infusion and Specialty Pharmacy
- Walgreens Co.
- And more!

Talking “Preparedness” with residents, businesses

As part of its ongoing commitment to the safety and welfare of Dallas County residents, the DCHHS Public Health Preparedness (PHP) Division reaches out into the community to provide information and education on emergency preparedness.

Last month during National Preparedness Month (NPM), DCHHS staff along with Medical Reserve Corps volunteers attended health and safety fairs and other local events to spread the important message of being prepared for a disaster.

DCHHS staff hit the streets going door-to-door to connect with residents and businesses. They also collaborated with schools to send information home with students.

Utilizing the NPM campaign sponsored by FEMA and CDC, DCHHS reached more than 3,000 people in the month of September. Using partnerships with emergency managers, first responder agencies, and other local community organizations, the PHP Division’s outreach program touched more than 11,000 people in 2013.

National Preparedness Month may be over, but DCHHS continues to work to ensure Dallas County residents are prepared. Visit www.dallascounty.org/hhs for more information.

Tammie Cooper, right, listens to tips on emergency preparedness. Cooper is a program coordinator at Exline Recreation Center in Dallas.
Flu season here, vaccines in stock

DCHHS is offering flu vaccines for adults and children. Individuals can come to the main location on Stemmons Freeway Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. to get a flu shot.

The vaccine is free for children who are eligible for Texas Vaccines for Children. The cost is $20 for adults.

DCHHS urges residents to get their flu shot early in the season while there are plenty of vaccines available.

“We have a large supply, but the interest to get it appears to be low,” said DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson. “Getting your shot in October as CDC recommends is best before the season gets underway.”

Flu season is generally from October to May with the peak being between December and February.

DCHHS Medical Director/Health Authority Dr. Christopher Perkins encourages everyone to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

“The flu shot is the best form of protection against the flu virus,” he said.

Last flu season, DCHHS received more than 9,700 positive flu tests in Dallas County. Over 1,100 of those were hospitalized. There were 3 pediatric deaths and 55 adult deaths in Dallas County in the 2013-14 flu season.

“Flu season is generally from October to May with the peak being between December and February. DCHHS Medical Director/Health Authority Dr. Christopher Perkins encourages everyone to get vaccinated as soon as possible. “The flu shot is the best form of protection against the flu virus,” he said. Last flu season, DCHHS received more than 9,700 positive flu tests in Dallas County. Over 1,100 of those were hospitalized. There were 3 pediatric deaths and 55 adult deaths in Dallas County in the 2013-14 flu season.

(REMAIN CAUTIOUS - MOSQUITO SEASON NOT OVER YET)

2014 Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Virus</th>
<th>Human Cases</th>
<th>Mosquito Pools</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Nile Virus</td>
<td>9 (3 neuroinvasive; 6 fever)</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chikungunya Virus</td>
<td>3 (Both imported)</td>
<td>0</td>
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</table>

* Number of cases reflects information received at time of publishing and is subject to change.

DEET

Whenever you’re outside, use insect repellents that contain DEET or other EPA-approved ingredients.

Dress

Wear long, loose, and light-colored clothing to avoid mosquito bites.

Drain

Drain all areas of standing water in and around your home and/or business.

Dusk/Dawn

Stay indoors during dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are active.

- Dr. Christopher Perkins, DCHHS Medical Director/Health Authority

Elizabeth Burleson, middle, talk with Roger and Mary Redhair before giving their flu shots.
EV-D68 CONFIRMED IN DALLAS

DCHHS received confirmation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of 10 cases positive for enterovirus-D68 (EV-D68).

“We understand CDC is working nonstop to test specimens from all over the U.S. and we appreciate their support in confirming these cases as quickly as possible,” said Zachary Thompson, DCHHS director. “Now we know EV-D68, as well as other viruses, is circulating in Dallas County, so residents should take the proper precautions to avoid transmission.”

EV-D68 is one of many non-polio enteroviruses. This virus was first identified in California in 1962. EV-D68 can cause mild to severe respiratory illness. Mild symptoms may include fever, runny nose, sneezing, cough, and body and muscle aches. There is not a vaccine for EV-D68 and there is no specific treatment for respiratory illness caused by EV-D68.

Since EV-D68 causes respiratory illness, the virus can be found in an infected person’s respiratory secretions, such as saliva, nasal mucus, or sputum. EV-D68 likely spreads from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or touches contaminated surfaces. In general, infants, children, and teenagers are most likely to get infected with enteroviruses and become ill. That’s because they do not yet have immunity (protection) from previous exposures to these viruses.

DCHHS Medical Director/Health Authority Dr. Christopher Perkins cautions not all respiratory illnesses occurring right now are EV-D68. This is the time of year when individuals experience more cold and flu-like symptoms.

“Respiratory illnesses can be caused by many different viruses and have similar symptoms,” said Dr. Perkins. “That’s why it’s important to get a flu shot, take steps to avoid getting sick, and see your medical provider whenever you are not feeling well so you can receive an appropriate diagnosis.”

Individuals should practice the following prevention habits to avoid the risk of getting EV-D68:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially after changing diapers.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid kissing, hugging, and sharing cups or eating utensils with people who are sick.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick.

DCHHS issued an EV-D68 health advisory to area medical providers and information to school nurses. For more information about EV-D68, visit: http://www.dallascounty.org/department/hhs/enterovirusD68.html.