



Broome County Health Department

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Message from the Director

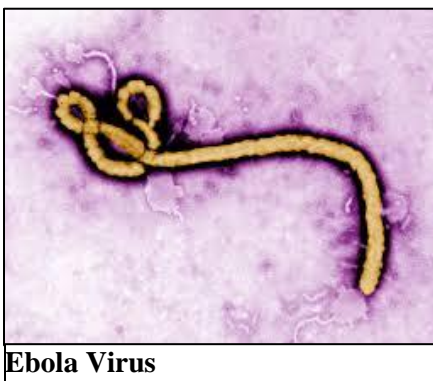
Over the past few months public health has been on the forefront of national attention as a result of the threat of Ebola. Your Broome County Health Department continues to work every day to ensure the health and safety of all residents and visitors to Broome County. I wish you a happy, healthy, and safe 2015!

Claudia A. Edwards, MS

Broome County Prepares for Ebola

Ebola is a rare disease in humans and primates caused by infection from a certain type of virus. There are several species of Ebola, all of which are within the virus family Filoviridae and genus Ebolavirus.

Ebola was first discovered in 1976 near the Ebola River in the country now known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since its first discovery, there have been several outbreaks of Ebola in Africa.



Ebola Virus

The current outbreak in Western Africa is the largest to have ever occurred.

The countries most affected are Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. There have also recently been cases in Mali.

The disease is spread through the blood and body fluids of persons both infected and symptomatic. Individuals without symptoms are unable to transmit the disease to others during the incubation period. Disease transmission can also occur from contact with the remains of a person who has died from Ebola or from a primate currently ill with the disease.

The threat of Ebola has caused a public health response on all levels of government. All travelers from the affected countries are routed to five airports for entry into the United States. According to the CDC, approximately 125 air travelers arrive from the four nations daily. At each of these airports the CDC conducts a screening and risk assessment to determine the likelihood the individual may have Ebola. This information is shared with the state and local health departments which serve the area the traveler is headed to. As of December 22, 2014, there are no patients being treated for Ebola within the United States.

Planning efforts within Broome County began late in the summer when concerns over the threat of Ebola began to increase. The Broome County Health Department brought

together a planning group consisting of the Broome County Office of Emergency Services, UHS Hospitals and Primary Care, Lourdes Hospital and Primary Care, Endwell Family Physicians, and Binghamton University. Over time the group increased in size to include the Broome County Sheriff's Office, Broome County Division of Security, Broome County Division of Aviation, and the Susquehanna Regional EMS Council.

The planning group developed an Ebola Virus Disease Response Annex to the Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan. The group also conducted several drills and exercises related to Ebola preparedness and response.

The Broome County Emergency Medical Services Coordinator facilitated an EMS Ebola Summit, hosted at Lourdes Hospital, to discuss how EMS services can prepare to recognize and provide care to Ebola patients. The Emergency Medical Services Coordinator and the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator also provided on-site training on proper use of personal protective equipment to ambulance service personnel throughout the County.

On November 3, 2014, County Executive Debra Preston held a press conference in partnership with Lourdes and UHS to brief the public on the preparedness efforts within Broome County.

The Health Department and its partners in emergency preparedness and response will continue to meet and share information until the outbreak in Africa is over.

For more information visit the Broome County Health Department's website at <http://www.gobroomecounty.com/hd>

Flu Vaccine a Good Action to Stay Healthy

The Acting New York State Commissioner of Health, Dr. Howard Zucker, declared influenza to be prevalent in New York State on December 11th, 2014. Recent media attention has been brought to the effectiveness of this year's influenza vaccine. This year's influenza vaccine is trivalent, meaning it offers protection against three flu virus strains; influenza A H1N1, influenza A H3N2, and influenza B.

Influenza vaccine takes months to develop and mass produce, so the strains of virus the vaccine will protect against are chosen months ahead of the typical flu season.

This year there have been laboratory confirmed cases of an influenza A H3N2 strain which is genetically different from the H3N2 strain the vaccine was designed for. Marianne Yourdon, Broome



County Communicable Disease Nurse states, "Even though this year's influenza vaccine is not a perfect match for one of the viruses seen circulating, the vaccine is still effective for both preventing and reducing the severity of influenza."

Young children, the elderly, and people with certain medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, cardiac disease, and other chronic health conditions are more likely to suffer complications from influenza. This group should contact their primary care provider at the first sign of influenza because they may need treatment with an antiviral medication.

Carbon Monoxide a Cause for Concern

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless odorless gas produced when fossil fuels are burned, such as by an oil or gas furnace. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CO poisoning kills several hundred people every year. There are several actions individuals can take to prevent CO exposure:

- Have your heating system, water heater and any other gas, oil, or coal burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician every year.
- Install a battery-operated or battery back-up CO detector in your home and check or replace the battery when you change the time on your clocks each spring and fall. If the detector sounds, leave your home immediately and call 911.
- Seek prompt medical attention if you suspect CO poisoning and are feeling dizzy, light-headed, or nauseous.
- Don't use a generator, charcoal grill, camp stove, or other gasoline or charcoal-burning device inside your home, basement, or garage or near a window.
- Don't run a car or truck inside a garage attached to your house, even if you leave the door open.
- Don't burn anything in a stove or fireplace that isn't vented.
- Don't heat your house with a gas oven.

For more information on carbon monoxide poisoning please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/co/>.

Preparing for Winter Weather

As Broome County is about to enter the coldest months of the year, it is important to remind individuals how they can prepare themselves for winter weather.

A good way to prepare for winter is to winterize your home. Actions to winterize your home include installing

weather stripping, insulation, and storm windows. It is good practice to clean out gutters and repair roof leaks. It is also important to check your heating systems to prevent fire or carbon monoxide (CO) emergencies.



Actions for preparing your vehicle for the winter months include servicing your vehicle's radiator, maintaining antifreeze levels, ensuring adequate tire tread and pressure,

and keeping your fuel tank full to avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines.

For more information on preparing for winter weather, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/WinterWeather/>.

Teen Traffic Safety Day a Big Success

The Broome County Traffic Safety Program and Broome County STOP-DWI Program hosted their 2nd annual Teen Traffic Safety Day event at the Floyd L. Maines Veterans Memorial Arena on October 16th, 2014. Motor vehicle crashes are one of the leading causes of death among adolescents. In an effort to reduce the number of teens injured or killed in Broome County by these crashes, this event raised awareness about



some of the most common issues among younger drivers and passengers; impaired driving, distracted driving and safety belt use.

Students had an opportunity to participate in a Battle of the Belts Competition, experience safety belt demonstrations by the NYS Police, take part in texting simulations provided by AT&T's It Can Wait Campaign, experience a motorcycle simulator provided by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, and



learn about the effects that drugs and alcohol can have on driving by attempting to complete simple tasks while wearing Fatal Vision Goggles. UHS

presented their *Let's Not Meet by Accident* program which focused on what happens after a crash, the rescue process, medical care of the victims and the possible trauma and lifelong injuries on the body. In addition, schools were able

to register for Celebrate My Drive® with State Farm Agent Mark Anderson for a chance to win up to \$100,000. The event ended with a presentation by Joe McCormack, Chief of the Vehicular Crimes Bureau at the Bronx District Attorney's Office, who shared with students the real life consequences of dangerous driving behaviors.



The event was attended by 16 different school districts and over 500 students.



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