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Press Release

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[MTA Headquarters](#)

IMMEDIATE

### Gov. Cuomo Outlines Ebola Preparedness Plan for New York State

#### *Unannounced Training Drills in Health Facilities Expanded to Occur in Mass Transit Centers and on College Campuses Statewide*

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today convened New York State agency leadership along with regional hospital and healthcare representatives to outline the State's plans for Ebola preparedness and to assure New Yorkers that the State is taking every precaution to protect their health and safety. The Governor has designated [eight hospitals statewide](#) to treat potential patients with Ebola. Additionally, the State Department of Health has issued a Commissioner's Order to all hospitals, diagnostic and treatment centers, and ambulance services in New York State, requiring that they follow protocols for identification, isolation and medical evaluation of patients requiring care. In order to ensure that New York is continuously prepared to safely treat anyone who is exposed to or contracts Ebola, an education session for healthcare workers will be held in New York City on October 21.

Governor Cuomo also announced that the Port Authority will coordinate procedure and practice between all State airports to ensure proper training is in place for airport personnel, and the Port Authority Police Department will be deploying two ambulances per shift at each of its airports to ensure the timely and safe transport of potential patients with Ebola. Additionally, the MTA will work to ensure that its employees have necessary equipment and training to protect themselves as well as subway, bus and commuter railroad customers. As part of the State's preparedness plan, unannounced drills currently occurring at hospitals and health care facilities will be expanded to college campuses as well as subway and mass transit areas. State agencies will continue to work together and make adjustments as necessary in the weeks and months to come in order to best protect New Yorkers.

"Protecting the people of this state is one of our top priorities in government, and I want all New Yorkers to know that we are doing everything necessary to safeguard against the risks of ebola," Governor Cuomo said. "Today I'm announcing a thorough effort involving multiple state agencies and authorities that will ensure we are prepared to address even the slightest possibility of this disease. On top of these measures, we are working in close coordination with federal and local agencies and health care professionals, and I want to thank all of them for their cooperation and support. This administration has always erred on the side of caution, and this issue is no different. New Yorkers should rest assured that we are taking the steps to be fully prepared for whatever the future brings."

New York State's Ebola plan calls for eight hospitals statewide to handle all patients diagnosed with Ebola, with plans to designate additional hospitals going forward. The following eight hospitals have agreed to the designation and are creating isolation units to accept patients:

- Mt. Sinai in Manhattan
- New York Presbyterian in Manhattan
- Bellevue in Manhattan
- Montefiore in the Bronx
- North Shore/LIJ Health System in Nassau County
- Upstate University Hospital in Syracuse
- University of Rochester Medical Center in Rochester
- Stony Brook University Hospital on Long Island

Various State agencies and authorities are already addressing the threat of Ebola, including:

**Department of Health:** In addition to updating protocols and hosting training exercises, the Department of Health will plan webinars for all hospital epidemiology, infection control and emergency room staff on Ebola. DOH will also draft another alert reiterating guidance about emergency department triage and infection control and take steps to be sure this guidance reaches all parts of the healthcare system, including clinics, urgent care centers, and primary care. DOH will also conduct an electronic survey of all hospitals to query Ebola readiness activities, training, and the availability of personal protective equipment (PPE). DOH regional staff – including personnel from the Office of Public Health's Epidemiology, Infection Control, and Primary Care and Health Systems Management Offices – will do joint visits to hospitals and other health care settings using a standard check for things like emergency department triage, care plan, PPE, and training.

**Port Authority:** At JFK, in coordination with personnel from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Customs and Border Protection and US Coast Guard, advanced screenings commenced on Saturday using detailed questionnaires for passengers originating in three West African nations. In addition, personnel from the CDC, Customs and Border Protection and the US Public Health Service had a practice drill with the Port Authority Police Department and other Federal, State and local partners on Friday afternoon at JFK for scenarios in which passengers who may have been infected with the virus are handled at JFK. Advanced screening began Saturday at JFK and at this time no passengers at JFK arriving from the three West African nations have been identified as having the Ebola virus.

**Metropolitan Transportation Authority:** The MTA has developed a protocol to keep its employees and customers safe during this time of heightened awareness. This protocol includes ensuring that at-risk employees have appropriate personal protective equipment to guard against infection and are trained in its use, as well as following best practices and recommended standards when cleaning MTA facilities. This protocol was developed in close consultation with the State Department of Health regarding symptoms and likelihood of potential exposure. The MTA has been meeting with its labor

unions this week to discuss this protocol and to make sure it is consistent and thorough in its implementation. The MTA will outline this Ebola virus protocol to customers through messaging throughout the MTA system in the coming days.

**Public Safety:** The Governor's Office of Public Safety is working with New York State Police, the New York State Chiefs and Sheriff's Associations and SUNY Chiefs to coordinate field advise for police officers regarding recommended equipment and procedures to reduce chance of contamination.

**Commissioner's Order:** Acting State Health Commissioner Howard Zucker has issued a Commissioner's Order to all hospitals, diagnostic and treatment centers, and ambulance services in New York State, requiring that they follow protocols for identification, isolation and medical evaluation of patients requiring care, and also mandating that all staff be trained in person in the practice of donning and removing personal protective equipment. The protocols are in place to ensure that New York's hospitals can safely care for and treat patients with Ebola. The Department of Health is also providing guidance to other healthcare professionals and facilities on the proper management of people with potential exposure to Ebola. The Commissioner's Order can be viewed [HERE](#).

More information about Ebola – including answers to common questions and links to other resources on the disease – is available [HERE](#).

State Health Commissioner Howard Zucker said, "Every hospital and health care provider in New York State must be prepared for a patient with Ebola to come to them. New York State is sharing guidance and working on training and practice drills and helping health care providers assess their readiness to ensure that all health care professionals know the guidelines and protocols so that we can provide the best possible care for patients while protecting the people who provide that care."

Port Authority Executive Director Pat Foye said, "Ensuring the health and safety of everyone who uses or works at our facilities is our number one priority. Under Governor Cuomo's leadership we are working with the State Department of Health, the CDC, the CBP and the rest of our federal, state and local partners to ensure the personnel at our airports are fully prepared to handle potential patients with Ebola or any other infectious disease."

State Police Superintendent Joseph D'Amico said, "Law enforcement are often the first responders to medical emergencies. The State Police is working with the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police, the New York Sheriffs Association and SUNY Police to share best practices, protocols and messaging to better prepare the law enforcement community in the event of a medical emergency."

**Training for Health Care Workers:** Next week, the State Department of Health will join representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Greater New York Hospital Association, 1199 SEIU and the Partnership for Quality Care for an Ebola education session for health care workers. The event will include national and New York City-area infection control experts, and a hands-on demonstration of wearing and removing equipment. The training will take place on Tuesday, October 21 from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Javits Center in New York City.

Healthcare Association of New York State President Dennis Whalen said, "Ebola is a serious concern for every hospital in New York State. The care of patients and the health and safety of our staff and workers are critical priorities. Each institution is training staff and workers in proper procedures; ensuring appropriate protocols and plans for patient assessment and care are developed, in place, and drilled; and making certain that adequate supplies of recommended Personal Protective Equipment are available for staff. We are working closely with the State Department of Health and these efforts will continue as new information becomes available from CDC and DOH. We will work with our hospitals to ensure compliance with the Commissioner's Order that reinforces the actions hospitals already have underway. Hospitals in New York State are institutions that are always ready to respond to threats of disease, disaster, and illness—and they are making every preparation to safely care for patients with Ebola, should the need arise."

Greater New York Hospital Association President Ken Raske said, "As the Texas Ebola cases have shown, a patient with Ebola can show up anywhere, so New York State needs to be at the highest level of preparedness. The State's plan—anchored by the outstanding leadership of the hospitals that will care for all Ebola patients—is a critically important development in ensuring that our patients receive the highest level of care while our invaluable health care workforce receives the highest level of protection. GNYHA will work with the State, local health departments and our hospitals to ensure that communication and coordination are the hallmarks of every element of the State's plan."

New York State Nurses Association Executive Director Jill Furillo, RN, said, "The New York State Nurses Association supports the State's decision to require each hospital to have written protocols for immediately identifying, isolating, and medically evaluating any person who could potentially be infected with Ebola. Additionally, we commend the State for requiring in-person training on donning and removing personal protective equipment, further ensuring the safety of all patients and the frontline workers who care for them. NYSNA looks forward to working with the Department of Health as we implement optimal statewide requirements for high-quality, safe care for all New Yorkers."

CEO and President of the Mount Sinai Health System Kenneth L. Davis, MD said, "As frontline health care workers, we are committed to protecting the health and well-being of our communities. We have established protocols to identify, treat and monitor patients who possibly have Ebola, and we are confident our efforts will successfully allow us to employ all necessary infection control measures to keep all patients and staff safe."

New York-Presbyterian Hospital CEO Steven J. Corwin, M.D. said, "We exist for the public good and we are committed to providing superlative care to all those who need our help, especially during times of crisis. As a designated Ebola Center, through specialized resources and a highly trained, core team of providers, New York-Presbyterian will be prepared to manage the complete course of care for an afflicted patient."

Montefiore Health System president and CEO Steven M. Safyer, MD said, "We applaud Governor Cuomo for his leadership on this potential public health issue. New Yorkers will be well-served by having specialty centers located in their communities with the expertise to respond quickly and efficiently if the need arises. Montefiore, with its academic partner, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, has nationally-recognized expertise in Ebola research and treating infectious diseases, and has a robust infection control program. We have been training our frontline care providers in best practices for many months to identify, isolate, and care for patients who may be infected with Ebola."

North Shore/LIJ President and CEO Michael Dowling said, "As New York's largest healthcare provider with 16 hospitals across the metropolitan area, the North Shore-LIJ Health System embraces its role as a regional resource in preparing for and responding to the Ebola emergency, including offering assistance to other healthcare providers. While all of our hospitals have been on high alert for patients who may have been exposed to the virus, we recognize the wisdom of designating a single location to serve as a receiving site for potential Ebola patients. We will work cooperatively with state and local health officials to maximize the protection of patients, staff, visitors and the community-at-large during this public health emergency."

