



One Medicine Symposium
Disease Communication

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Disease Communication

While some things change dramatically...



Disease Communication

Some things never change:

The need for clear,
concise, accurate
information,



- from a credible, trusted source
- with a specific call-to-action
- and specific resources for next steps



- Partnerships are key
- Preparation is critical
- Planning is a must

Disease Communication

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza



- Communication Plan:
 - Know your audience
 - Identify media spokespeople
 - Develop key messages for all platforms (media, social, internal audiences, external audiences)
 - Develop FAQs
 - Build Website (keep dark until needed)
 - Create PIO checklist

A screenshot of the North Carolina Health and Human Services website. The top navigation bar is dark blue with the NC logo and the text "Health and Human Services". A search bar is located in the center of the top bar. To the right of the search bar are links for "NC.GOV", "AGENCIES", "JOBS", and "SERVICES". Below the top bar is a secondary navigation bar with links for "Home", "Assistance", "Divisions", "Documents", "Providers", "News", "About", and "Contact". The main content area shows a breadcrumb trail: "NC.DHHS" > "News" > "Avian Flu". The title "Avian Flu" is prominently displayed in a large, dark font. To the right of the title is a dark blue box with the text "News" and "Press Releases" below it.





- Website contains:
 - Key messages
 - The risk of human infection is low
 - HPAI is NOT a food safety issue
 - A coordinated effort to keep N.C. poultry flocks safe
 - About Avian Influenza
 - Background on HPAI in the United States
 - What happens if North Carolina is impacted?
 - FAQs



- Website
 - Information will be repurposed and packaged in different ways
 - Easily updateable, as needed
- Social media
 - Key messages
 - Key FAQs
 - Distributed through social media, linking back to the site
- Media releases, newsletters, blog posts



- Key FAQs:
 - Is Avian Influenza a potentially deadly virus?
 - Does “highly pathogenic” mean it is especially dangerous to animals and humans?
 - Will my seasonal flu vaccine protect me from Avian Influenza?
 - What if I have flu-like symptoms?
 - Are poultry and egg products safe to eat?



- In large-scale, multi-agency events, plan should include who's on first:
 - Department of Agriculture – lead agency, receive initial notification
 - Department of Health and Human Services – impact to humans (care of workers going into farms, communication about public health issues)
 - Department of Environmental Quality – impact to environment



- Principles remain the same:
 - Be credible and trustworthy
 - Collaborate – sister Cabinet agencies, CDC, local health departments
 - Be disciplined with key messages, reinforce them through all channels
 - Protect privacy – at all costs.
 - Release information to educate the public so they can protect themselves
 - Never compromise on patient privacy
 - Stay in your own lane



Emory University Hospital Prepares for Ebola Patients

August 1, 2014, 4:55 p.m.

By Emory Healthcare

As you've heard in the media, Emory University Hospital plans to receive a patient with Ebola virus infection in the next several days. Please be assured that **our hospital is prepared and ready to handle this situation**. We have a highly specialized, **isolated unit** in the hospital that was set up in collaboration with the CDC to treat patients who are exposed to certain serious infectious diseases. This unit is physically separate from other patient areas and has unique equipment and infrastructure that provide an extraordinarily high level of clinical isolation. In fact, Emory University Hospital **is one of just four facilities in the entire country with such a specialized unit**.

Emory University Hospital **physicians, nurses and staff are highly trained** in the specific and unique protocols and procedures necessary to treat and care for this type of patient. For this specially trained staff, these procedures are practiced on a regular basis throughout the year, so we are **fully prepared** for this type of situation.



Disease Communication

Ebola Virus Disease



- Reinforced messaging:

- Blog site to educate
 - About Ebola
 - FAQs continually updated
- Letter to employees
- Ongoing media updates
- Social media
 - Fueled additional FAQs
 - Linked to blogs for more
 - Provides insight into public opinion
- Consistent reinforcement of messages across all audiences, internal and external
- Op-Ed by the Chief Nurse





The Washington Post

PostEverything

I'm the head nurse at Emory. This is why we wanted to bring the Ebola patients to the U.S.

These patients will benefit – not threaten – the country.

By Susan M. Grant, RN
Chief Nurse, Emory Healthcare



Disease Communication

Ebola Virus Disease



“As human beings, we all hope that if we were in need of superior health care, our country and its top doctors would help us get better.

“We can either let our actions be guided by misunderstandings, fear and self-interest, or we can lead by knowledge, science and compassion.

“We can fear, or we can care.”

By Susan M. Grant, RN
Chief Nurse, Emory Healthcare





- **October 8, 2014 – DHHS Secretary Aldona Wos Says N.C. Has Been Preparing for Ebola** – working closely with its public health partners and health care providers since July to prepare for the possibility that a patient in North Carolina might be diagnosed with Ebola. Over the past few months, extensive guidance has been sent to health care providers and procedures have been put in place to routinely screen and evaluate patients.
- **November 2, 2015 – N.C. Department of Health and Human Services Closely Monitoring a Traveler from Liberia** – DHHS and Durham and Person County Health Departments are working closely with Duke University Hospital to monitor a patient who departed from Liberia and arrived in the United States via Newark Liberty International Airport on Oct. 31. The individual arrived in Person County, N.C. on Nov. 1 and developed a fever this morning (Nov. 2).



- **November 3, 2014 – N.C. Department of Health and Human Services Testing Returned a Preliminary Negative Result for Ebola in Patient at Duke University Hospital** – Additional testing will occur 72 hours after his fever first developed to confirm this result.
- **November 5, 2014 – Additional Testing Confirms a Negative Result for Ebola for Patient at Duke University Hospital** – A subsequent test of a new specimen provided by the patient at Duke University Hospital in Durham has resulted in a confirmed negative laboratory diagnosis for Ebola. This test, conducted 72 hours after an initial test was negative for the virus, confirms the patient is currently Ebola free.

Disease Communication

Key Takeaways

- Be accurate and clear. Use plain language. No jargon. No acronyms.
- Be trustworthy.
- Be compassionate and reassuring. Understand anxiety is high.
- Communicate often, using all available resources.
- Reinforce your key messages.
- Be the expert.
- Be the educator.
- Tell the public what they know and how to use that information to best protect themselves and their families

Nobody cares how much you know,
until they know how much you care



Questions?

