



Protecting, maintaining and improving the health of all Minnesotans

October 13, 2014

Dear Colleague:

The recent headlines of Ebola cases in Texas underscore the importance for all funeral establishments and crematories in Minnesota being prepared to safely address the handling of the body of a person who has died from Ebola or other infectious diseases. While the odds of a person infected with Ebola presenting for treatment at any given hospital in Minnesota may be quite low, the possibility will continue to exist as long as the outbreak persists in West Africa.

Many hospitals in Minnesota have taken steps to prepare for any potential cases. In that same spirit of preparedness, now is the time for every funeral home and crematory in Minnesota to verify that it is fully prepared to handle the remains of a decedent and protect your staff so they can safely do their job.

To help your funeral home or crematory's review and planning efforts, please review and share the following resources:

- Guidance for safe handling of human remains with Ebola

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/guidance-safe-handling-human-remains-ebola-patients-us-hospitals-mortuaries.html>

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Ebola Home Page

http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html?s_cid=cdc_homepage_feature_001

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) stands ready to assist you with questions and communicating information to media and various stakeholders. We urge you to contact the MDH Infectious Disease, Epidemiology, Prevention and Control Division at 651-201-5414 (toll free 1-877-676-5414) or the Mortuary Sciences Section at 651-201-3829 if you have any questions with the handling of the remains of a decedent whose symptoms and history indicate a heightened risk of Ebola infection.

Thank you for your partnership in serving Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward E. Ehlinger".

Edward Ehlinger, MD, MSPH
Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Health