PREPARING FOR EBOLA

During the AACC’s Fall Meeting in November in Washington, DC, the association convened a panel of experts to discuss how the arrival of the Ebola virus in the United States may affect postsecondary institutions. Below are information, suggestions, and useful links to resources that provide guidance and may assist you in answering questions from students, faculty, other staff, and your community.

About Ebola

As with any public health issue, the best way to protect and avoid undue concern is through the dissemination of faculty information. The following links to resources from government agencies, such as the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provide important, objective guidance. The CDC statements, which are consistent with all authoritative guidance, have a few basic elements.

- Outside of the three affected countries in West Africa, Ebola is a very rare disease.
- Ebola is **not spread through casual contact**; therefore, the risk of an outbreak in the U.S. is very low.
- Ebola is only spread **through direct contact** with body fluids from a person who is sick with and showing symptoms of Ebola.
- Ebola is **not spread through the air**. Unlike the flu, Ebola is not spread through coughing or sneezing.
- A person must have symptoms in order **to spread Ebola to others**. Those symptoms include fever, headache, joint and muscle aches, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, lack of appetite and abnormal bleeding. While flu and Ebola have some similar symptoms, Ebola symptoms are generally more severe and rapidly worsen.

- Stay up to date on the most recent CDC information and guidelines, which are posted [here](#).
- Connect with your local and state health department for guidance since regulations and recommendations vary from state to state and even city to city. You can find information and links to state health departments on the [Ebola page](#) of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials.
• Be aware that the Ebola outbreak is occurring in three countries in West Africa (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone). Public health authorities have not issued alerts for other countries within or outside of Africa. For students, faculty or other staff members traveling to or from Guinea, Liberia or Sierra Leone, there is specific CDC guidance here. Travelers returning from nations with Ebola outbreaks will be monitored by public health officials and will receive a CARE kit (Check and Report Ebola) at the airport to help them monitor themselves.

• Review your current health-related policies. Pay special attention to questions and concerns raised by those living and working with those being monitored and circulate the basic health information provided by CDC.

• If you have nursing or allied health students who spend time in healthcare facilities or if your institution has an on-campus student health clinic, refer to CDC guidance and confer with your local or state health department. CDC also has specific guidance for student health clinics here.

About AACC
As the voice of the nation’s community colleges, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), delivers educational and economic opportunity for 13 million diverse students in search of the American Dream. Uniquely dedicated to access and success for all students, AACC’s nearly 1,200 member colleges provide an on-ramp to degree attainment, skilled careers and family-supporting wages. Located in Washington, D.C., AACC advocates for these not-for-profit, public-serving institutions to ensure they have the resources and support they need to deliver on the mission of increasing economic mobility for all.