



**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES**  
*Aging and Long-Term Support Administration*  
*PO Box 45600, Olympia, WA 98504-5600*

November 10, 2014

**ALTSA: NH #2014-024**  
**EBOLA INFORMATION SHARING**

Dear Nursing Facility/Home Administrator:

We are aware that Ebola has made national news since the death of the individual in Texas and illness and subsequent recovery of two of the nurses who cared for him. Although the thought of Ebola in the U.S. is frightening, we want to assure you that DSHS, the Department of Health (DOH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and many other local, state and federal health organizations are committed to keeping you and your residents safe and well informed.

Ebola is transmitted only through contact with body fluids, it is not airborne. It is therefore not as easily contracted as many people think. You cannot contract Ebola unless you come into direct contact with an infected person's bodily fluids. The reason for the widespread outbreak in portions of several countries in West and Central Africa is because they lack the medical staff, facilities, and systems to treat individuals who contracted the virus. Washington State has state of the art hospitals and well-trained medical staff is well prepared to identify, contain and control any outbreak here.

Although there have been isolated cases of Ebola in the US, they are all directly related to people who had direct exposure to individuals who were infected. Infected individuals are only contagious when they are displaying symptoms. Unless you come into direct contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person, you cannot contract the virus. There are no infected individuals in Washington State.

If you would like more information on Ebola please visit the DOH website at: [www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/IllnessandDisease/Ebola](http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/IllnessandDisease/Ebola). The information on this site is updated regularly as new information is received. If you have questions not answered on the DOH website, DOH suggests that you contact your local health department or district, which you can identify on this link: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/AboutUs/PublicHealthSystem/LocalHealthJurisdictions>

Since the population we serve is susceptible to catching the flu, we would like to remind you of some important tips to prevent the flu:

- Get a flu shot
- Wash your hands often
- Cough into your sleeve or use a tissue and then dispose of it
- Do not allow sick employees to come to work and have a plan for coverage if they are not able to come to work
- Ask visitors to refrain from visiting your home when they are sick
- Seek medical advice if your residents have flu-like symptoms

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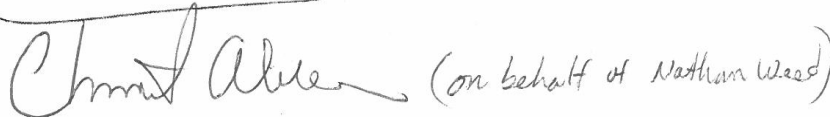
For more information on how to prevent a flu outbreak in your home, please visit:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/65over.htm>

Thank you for your continued commitment to providing quality care to our vulnerable adults in the State of Washington.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Carl I. Walters II. in cursive script.

Carl I. Walters II., Director  
Residential Care Services  
Department of Social and Health Services

Handwritten signature of Nathan Weed in cursive script, followed by the text "(on behalf of Nathan Weed)".

Nathan Weed, Director  
Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response  
Department of Health