

How to Communicate Routing of Patients Who Might Have Ebola

We plan to route patients who might have Ebola to another organization, another building or campus of our organization, or a specific part of our own campus for medical evaluation, testing, and holding. How do we communicate this to stakeholders?

Some healthcare organizations will not be involved in the evaluation and testing or treatment of patients who might have Ebola (e.g., a home care agency may direct a client with a risk factor and symptoms to go to a hospital for medical evaluation and testing). Other organizations may choose to transport such patients to a specific campus or part of their campus (e.g., a hospital may designate a space or building where such patients may present and undergo evaluation to avoid having them wait in the emergency department).

In such cases, the organization should coordinate with their communications department to determine the best methods for disseminating these plans to a range of stakeholders. Examples of steps that the organization may take are as follows:

- Define the scope of services that the facility expects to provide if it does encounter an individual who may have Ebola, considering national recommendations from credible sources, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Identify the stakeholders who require the information. Examples include the following:
 - State and federal health officials
 - Other local healthcare and social services organizations
 - Local municipalities
 - Police and fire departments, emergency response coordinators, and emergency medical services (EMS), including 911
 - Area institutions (e.g., airports, schools, transit authorities)
 - The organization's staff and security personnel

- Clients of residential care or service settings (e.g., long-term care, home care, housing programs) and their family members
- Community groups that serve people from countries experiencing Ebola transmission (e.g., cultural centers)
- Local organizations that may have sent employees or volunteers to affected countries
- The general public (Include messages for both potential patients and their family members.)
- Coordinate patient routing logistics with state and federal health officials, local municipalities, EMS and other first responders, and care partners.
- If the organization will perform medical evaluation for patients who may have Ebola, consider asking care partners, EMS, and first responders to notify the organization before the patient's arrival whenever possible.
 - Include contact information in messages given to these stakeholders.
 - Review the policy on influx of infectious patients to determine if Ebola risk warrants modification of facility response systems.
- Create messages that outline how the identified stakeholders should route individuals who may have Ebola. Tailor the message to each stakeholder group as necessary.
 - List routing steps (e.g., whom to notify, actions to take or not take) in order.
 - Use clear, everyday language.
 - For messages aimed at the general public, identify multiple modes of communication (e.g., advertisements, signage on the campus, social media, media outlets).
 - Translate messages as necessary into different languages depending on the demographic makeup of the community.
- Communicate the messages to stakeholders.
- Adjust messages and outreach as necessary as circumstances change.
- Create protocols for staff to follow in the event that patients who may have Ebola present in a location that falls outside the patient routing plan (e.g., other area of the hospital campus, outpatients from physician offices).