



Alief Montessori Community School

Date: October 15, 2014

RE: **Important Health Messages from AMCS**

Dear Parents,

The health and safety of our students and staff is the number one priority in AMCS.

With the recent heightened awareness and concern over infectious diseases, specifically, the Ebola outbreak and enterovirus D-68 (EV-D68), we would like to use this opportunity to let you know what precautions, procedures and preventative actions we are taking to protect our children. We also want to share important information with you so that you and your families can take all necessary precautions.

AMCS is fully aware of the Ebola virus epidemic in West Africa. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the risk of a widespread outbreak in the United States is very low and the Agency and its partners are taking the necessary precautions.

To keep you informed, we would like to share some updates.

On September 30, 2014, the CDC and Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) confirmed a positive laboratory test result for the Ebola virus from a patient at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas, TX. The patient arrived from Liberia in West Africa to visit family members in North Texas during the previous week. The patient has unfortunately succumbed to the disease. On October 15, two more health workers who tended to the infected individual have been tested positive of Ebola virus.

According to both DSHS and the CDC, the positive result on these three patients does not represent an increased risk to the general community. The virus is spread through direct contact (through broken skin or unprotected mucous membrane) with the blood or body fluids of a person who is sick with Ebola, with objects like needles that have been contaminated with the virus, or with infected animals. Ebola is not spread through the air, water or, in general, by food; however, in Africa, Ebola may be spread as a result of handling raw bush meat (wild animals hunted for food).

Symptoms of Ebola include:

- Fever (greater than 38.6°C or 101.5°F)
- Severe headache
- Muscle pain & Weakness
- Diarrhea & Vomiting
- Abdominal (stomach) pain
- Unexplained hemorrhage (bleeding or bruising)

Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to Ebola, but the average is 8 to 10 days.

Treatment and Prevention – Ebola

Currently there is no FDA-approved vaccine available for Ebola. If you travel to or are in an area affected by an Ebola outbreak, make sure to do the following:

- Practice careful hygiene. For example, wash your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and avoid contact with blood and body fluids.
- Do not handle items that may have come in contact with an infected person's blood or body fluids (such as clothes, bedding, needles, and medical equipment).
- Avoid funeral or burial rituals that require handling the body of someone who has died from Ebola.
- Avoid contact with bats and nonhuman primates or blood, fluids, and raw meat prepared from these animals.

Symptoms of EV-D68

Most children who get infected with EV-D68 may have cold-like symptoms, like fever, runny nose, sneezing, coughing, and body and muscle aches. More severe symptoms include wheezing and difficulty breathing. Children with asthma are at risk for severe symptoms from EV-D68.

Treatment and Prevention – EV-D68

Currently, there is no specific treatment for EV-D68. To better protect your children from EV-D68, here are the steps you can take:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact, such as kissing, hugging, and sharing cups or eating utensils, with people who are sick, or when you are sick
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or shirt sleeve, not your hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick
- Stay home when you are sick and keep sick children home from school

If your child has asthma, CDC recommends you do the following to help maintain control of your child's asthma during this time:

- Discuss and update your child's asthma action plan with your child's doctor (usually pulmonologist or pediatrician).
- Make sure your child takes prescribed asthma medications as directed, especially long term control medication(s).
- Make sure your child knows to keep asthma reliever medication with him or her or has access to it at all times.
- Get your child a flu vaccine, since flu can trigger an asthma attack.

- If your child develops new or worsening asthma symptoms, follow the steps in his or her asthma action plan. If your symptoms do not go away, call your child's doctor right away.
- Make sure caregiver(s) and/or teacher(s) are aware of the child's condition, and that they know how to help if the he or she experiences any symptoms related to asthma.
- Call your child's doctor if he or she is having difficulty breathing, if you feel you are unable to control symptoms, or if symptoms are getting worse.

Currently, medical and public health professionals from Dallas County, Texas, DSHS and CDC are actively combining their efforts to contain the infection of the sick individual and also to control its transmission to the close personal contacts of the ill person.

We urge you to visit the following website for the latest updates and findings.

- Texas Department of State Health Services: <https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/>
- DSHS Ebola Information Page: <https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/preparedness/ebola-outbreak.aspx>
- Center of Disease Control Ebola Index: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html>
- What We Know About EV-D68: <http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about/ev-d68.html>

AMCS will also continue to share with you updated information concerning important health topics.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature reads "Nancy Chieu" in a cursive script.

Nancy Chieu
Superintendent
Alief Montessori Community School