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Governor Christie Activates Ebola Preparedness Plan to Coordinate an Effective New Jersey Response

Wednesday, October 22, 2014

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Trenton, NJ – Acting to ensure a unified, effective response to the Ebola virus, Governor Chris Christie today activated an Ebola preparedness plan to direct all activities of key state departments, hospitals and the medical community and homeland security apparatus to protect the public and create a strong line of defense against Ebola in New Jersey.

"My first and primary mission as Governor always is to protect the public health and safety of every resident of our state. Ebola also presents the challenge of defeating overreaction and fear in the public, and we can do that by creating a coordinated response and using a team of individuals already highly tested and experienced in dealing with public emergencies in our state. This should reassure the public that we are doing all in our power to protect against the arrival or spread of Ebola in New Jersey."

Governor Christie signed Executive Order No. 164 today, creating the Ebola Virus Disease and Response Team, as he announced that an air traveler arriving at Newark Liberty International Airport via Brussels from West Africa last evening had been found to be asymptomatic today after execution of all appropriate protocols, from airport arrival to quarantine and care at University Hospital in Newark. The EVD-JRT will direct all matters of New Jersey's public health response. It will be comprised of six members: the Commissioners of the Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Department of Education, the Attorney General, the Director of the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness and the Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police.

The Governor's Executive Order:

- Designates the EVD-JRT as the lead entity for coordinating all of New Jersey's efforts to appropriately prepare for and respond to public health needs stemming from the threat of Ebola, including coordination with the federal government, local health officials, hospitals and other healthcare facilities
- Empowers the EVD-JRT to create an advisory panel to develop and deploy the State's preparation and response to EVD, including administration officials and medical professionals

The EVD-JRT will work directly with hospitals and other healthcare facilities to manage preparations for the management of patients demonstrating Ebola symptoms or risks. To that end, Governor Christie today designated three New Jersey trauma centers to receive any Ebola-suspected cases: Hackensack University Hospital, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick and University Hospital in Newark. The state Health Department has also purchased nearly \$1 million worth of additional personal protection equipment for health care employees.

The EVD-JRT will also coordinate with federal and state partners, and coordinate among all other Executive Branch agencies, including:

- Department of Children and Families
- Department of Environmental Protection
- Department of Transportation
- New Jersey Transit
- Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

A PDF copy of Executive Order No. 164

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Transcript:

Governor Christie: I mean I just said to her, Bridget, you know, it's not something that you need to be concerned about and she seemed to buy that from me because we are generally authority figures with our children and if we take time to just listen and what I did mostly in that conversation was listen to her. You know she had these concerns that obviously, most parents know these concerns usually come out at bed time and sometimes you wonder whether they're real concerns or whether they're just an excuse not to go to bed. But you sit there and you listen. I listened to her for a long time about what her concerns were for a few minutes. And then I said to her, listen it's not going to happen. You're not going to get it. That's not the way this works. It's not like getting a cold which is what she was really worrying about. And I said you're going to be fine and go to sleep. If the questions had gotten any more complex, I would have gotten her on the phone with Mary. But I was able to deal with it relatively quickly and when Mary's son, Patrick, has concerns about other issues of government, they call me. So it's a very good relationship in that way and we were able to handle it. But I encourage parents out there because I'm sure I'm not the only parent having this experience. Listen to your children, then talk to them and calm them because the hysteria that's going on in terms of the coverage, just the volume of coverage. Put aside the content. Just the volume of coverage is leading a lot of children to be concerned about this in a way that just isn't proportional to the risk.

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