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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Orange County Actively Planning and Training for Ebola

Orange County, NC (October 17, 2014) – The Orange County Health Department is working collaboratively with other County departments and partner agencies to prepare for the unlikely event of an Ebola case, or cases, within Orange County. It is important to note that at this time there are no cases, or suspect cases of Ebola in Orange County or North Carolina. As a precautionary measure, a comprehensive plan that includes a whole community approach from the local health department, to hospitals, emergency services, and companion animals is not only being planned on paper, but tested in exercises that enable response to be evaluated and modified as necessary to respond most effectively should the need arise.

“We are tackling this from all angles to ensure similar procedures are in place and lines of communication are open to make sure our residents are taken care of and risk minimized,” stated Dr. Colleen Bridger, Orange County Health Director.

County departments are participating in ongoing training and receiving regular guidance from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. Staff is engaging in exercises of various scenarios such as exposure events in a healthcare/clinic setting, to schools, to emergency response. In addition to planning and practicing the plan, keeping partner organizations up-to-date has been equally important. Since the end of July, the health department has been providing regular updates and guidance to medical providers, schools, and first responders. County staff continues to receive training and update protocols as they become available.

In the event of local cases of Ebola, the Orange County Health Department will work to safeguard the community in the same way we do in other communicable disease situations. The role of the local health department is to screen suspect cases and perform [contact tracing](#), issue isolation and quarantine orders, keep providers informed, and serve as a liaison to the state’s Communicable Disease Branch and the local school systems.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services has set up a public information hotline specifically for Ebola questions. The public can **call 1-800-222-1222 and press 6** to ask questions about topics such as how Ebola is spread, signs and symptoms, as well as risk factors. Additionally, the State has created a website with information for the public and providers. The State’s website is

<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/ebola/>. Locally, the Orange County Health Department has set up a webpage sharing similar information which also includes local information as it becomes available. The website for Orange County is <http://www.orangecountync.gov/health/ebola.asp>.

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