

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0506

October 15, 2014

Ms. Laurie Harting
Senior Vice President of Operations Greater Sacramento Service Area
Dignity Health
3400 Data Drive
Rancho Cordova, California 95670

Dear Ms. Harting,

As you are well aware, the current Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa has escalated to a public health crisis of international concern. I believe it of utmost importance that we are prepared and communicate that preparedness to our communities. Hospitals are in a unique position to act as leaders on this issue and to help demonstrate readiness.

I would like to thank Catherine Hesse and Clara Evans of Dignity Health for actively participating in the stakeholder group meeting that I convened in Sacramento last week along with the other three area hospitals, the Public Health Department, and the airport. We had a meaningful and open discussion about the procedures and protocols that are in place to protect the public from infectious disease outbreaks such as Ebola, and what would happen should a case emerge in Sacramento.

As we discussed during the meeting, our region's health care system has long been equipped for such crises, but there is always more that we can do to be vigilant and cautious. I appreciated hearing about the training and drilling occurring in your health system to consistently update your staff on best practices, including appropriate procedures and protocol and maneuvering personal protective equipment (PPE). I am encouraged that the region's hospitals have been coordinating with each other under the leadership of the Sacramento County Public Health Department. It will take all pieces of the system working together and "over-communicating" to achieve proper preparedness.

To continue our conversation on Ebola and public health preparedness, I would like to garner further clarification from each of the region's hospitals on the following:

- Each hospital has infectious disease protocol based on standards and guidance issued by infectious disease specialists and public health agencies. Does Dignity Health have any plans to summarize these procedures, and the core functions of public health preparedness, for the public?
- Although hospitals are generally prepared for a variety of infectious disease outbreaks, I believe special care must be taken in this case to ensure that the hospitals are prepared specifically for Ebola. Although it is unlikely a case would present in Sacramento, extra efforts to design protocols specifically for Ebola will go a long way to mitigate public concern and best practices will be applicable to future potential outbreaks. How have best practices, particularly from the Ebola scare at Kaiser Permanente, been documented and

disseminated? What is the hospital's plan to continue to document and share best practices and lessons learned?

- Hospital meeting participants indicated that drills are currently being run with staff and that this is an effective way to prepare for response. Please tell me more about these drills. Are they specific to Ebola or general infectious disease response? Do you have adequate resources, including guidance, funding, and staff, to conduct said drills?
- Press has reported concerns from health care workers nationwide, specifically nurses, that they have not been adequately trained to prepare for an Ebola response. During the meeting we discussed training occurring throughout the hospital, can you elaborate on how your hospital is training and preparing all of your staff, including nurses, administrators, and first responders? Have you developed training specific to Ebola so that your staff is armed with the most up-to-date information? How do you communicate updated information to your staff? How are you addressing concerns raised by staff and patients?
- Alleviating concerns of the public is very important to most effectively control and manage this outbreak. The public needs to understand what the risks are, and when to be concerned enough to present to the health care system. How are staff trained to speak with patients about Ebola? Does Dignity Health have a plan to articulate its infectious disease protocols and procedures to the public? Do the regional hospitals, in coordination with the Public Health Department, have a plan to educate the public on the disease?
- Responding to infectious disease outbreaks, include infectious disease reporting and surveillance, are core functions of our nation's public health system. Unfortunately, until a crisis arises, these functions are often chronically ignored and underfunded throughout the country. Please describe the funding mechanisms at a local level and how they could be improved to help our health system be prepared now and in the future.
- What else can the federal government do to provide you with the resources to successfully combat Ebola?

Again, thank you for actively participating in this dialogue. I know you are committed to continuing to provide high quality health care services to our region. I appreciate Dignity Health's continued transparency on this issue and willingness to work together to ensure robust preparedness now and in the future. I look forward to your thoughtful responses and to continue addressing concerns and challenges with you.

Sincerely,



DORIS O. MATSUI
Member of Congress

Cc: C. Duane Dauner, President and Chief Executive Officer, California Hospital Association
Erica Murray, President and Chief Executive Officer, California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems
Olivia Kasirye, M.D., Public Health Officer, Sacramento County

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October 15, 2014

Ms. Patricia Rodriguez
Senior Vice President and Area Manager
Kaiser Permanente, South Sacramento
6600 Bruceville Road
Sacramento, California 95823

Dear Ms. Rodriguez,

As you are well aware, the current Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa has escalated to a public health crisis of international concern. I believe it of utmost importance that we are prepared and communicate that preparedness to our communities. Hospitals are in a unique position to act as leaders on this issue and to help demonstrate readiness.

I would like to thank you and Dr. John Belko for actively participating in the stakeholder group meeting that I convened in Sacramento last week along with the other three area hospitals, the Public Health Department, and the airport. We had a meaningful and open discussion about the procedures and protocols that are in place to protect the public from infectious disease outbreaks such as Ebola, and what would happen should a case emerge in Sacramento.

As we discussed during the meeting, our region's health care system has long been equipped for such crises, but there is always more that we can do to be vigilant and cautious. I appreciated hearing about the training and drilling occurring in your health system to consistently update your staff on best practices, including appropriate procedures and protocol and maneuvering personal protective equipment (PPE). I am encouraged that the region's hospitals have been coordinating with each other under the leadership of the Sacramento County Public Health Department. It will take all pieces of the system working together and "over-communicating" to achieve proper preparedness.

To continue our conversation on Ebola and public health preparedness, I would like to garner further clarification from each of the region's hospitals on the following:

- Each hospital has infectious disease protocol based on standards and guidance issued by infectious disease specialists and public health agencies. Does Kaiser Permanente South Sacramento have any plans to summarize these procedures, and the core functions of public health preparedness, for the public?
- Although hospitals are generally prepared for a variety of infectious disease outbreaks, I believe special care must be taken in this case to ensure that the hospitals are prepared specifically for Ebola. Although it is unlikely a case would present in Sacramento, extra efforts to design protocols specifically for Ebola will go a long way to mitigate public concern and best practices will be applicable to future potential outbreaks. How have best practices, particularly from the Ebola scare at Kaiser Permanente, been documented and disseminated? What is the hospital's plan to continue to document and share best practices and lessons learned?

- Hospital meeting participants indicated that drills are currently being run with staff and that this is an effective way to prepare for response. Please tell me more about these drills. Are they specific to Ebola or general infectious disease response? Do you have adequate resources, including guidance, funding, and staff, to conduct said drills?
- Press has reported concerns from health care workers nationwide, specifically nurses, that they have not been adequately trained to prepare for an Ebola response. During the meeting we discussed training occurring throughout the hospital, can you elaborate on how your hospital is training and preparing all of your staff, including nurses, administrators, and first responders? Have you developed training specific to Ebola so that your staff is armed with the most up-to-date information? How do you communicate updated information to your staff? How are you addressing concerns raised by staff and patients?
- Alleviating concerns of the public is very important to most effectively control and manage this outbreak. The public needs to understand what the risks are, and when to be concerned enough to present to the health care system. How are staff trained to speak with patients about Ebola? Does Kaiser Permanente South Sacramento have a plan to articulate its infectious disease protocols and procedures to the public? Do the regional hospitals, in coordination with the Public Health Department, have a plan to educate the public on the disease?
- Responding to infectious disease outbreaks, include infectious disease reporting and surveillance, are core functions of our nation's public health system. Unfortunately, until a crisis arises, these functions are often chronically ignored and underfunded throughout the country. Please describe the funding mechanisms at a local level and how they could be improved to help our health system be prepared now and in the future.
- What else can the federal government do to provide you with the resources to successfully combat Ebola?

Again, thank you for actively participating in this dialogue. I know you are committed to continuing to provide high quality health care services to our region. I appreciate Kaiser Permanente South Sacramento's continued transparency on this issue and willingness to work together to ensure robust preparedness now and in the future. I look forward to your thoughtful responses and to continue addressing concerns and challenges with you.

Sincerely,



DORIS O. MATSUI
Member of Congress

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Erica Murray, President and Chief Executive Officer, California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems
Olivia Kasirye, M.D., Public Health Officer, Sacramento County

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Mrs. Carrie Owen Plietz
Chief Executive Officer
Sutter Medical Center, Sacramento
2801 L Street
Sacramento, California 95816

Dear Mrs. Owen Plietz,

As you are well aware, the current Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa has escalated to a public health crisis of international concern. I believe it of utmost importance that we are prepared and communicate that preparedness to our communities. Hospitals are in a unique position to act as leaders on this issue and to help demonstrate readiness.

I would like to thank Susan Sherman of Sutter Medical Center, Sacramento for actively participating in the stakeholder group meeting that I convened in Sacramento last week along with the other three area hospitals, the Public Health Department, and the airport. We had a meaningful and open discussion about the procedures and protocols that are in place to protect the public from infectious disease outbreaks such as Ebola, and what would happen should a case emerge in Sacramento.

As we discussed during the meeting, our region's health care system has long been equipped for such crises, but there is always more that we can do to be vigilant and cautious. I appreciated hearing about the training and drilling occurring in your health system to consistently update your staff on best practices, including appropriate procedures and protocol and maneuvering personal protective equipment (PPE). I am encouraged that the region's hospitals have been coordinating with each other under the leadership of the Sacramento County Public Health Department. It will take all pieces of the system working together and "over-communicating" to achieve proper preparedness.

To continue our conversation on Ebola and public health preparedness, I would like to garner further clarification from each of the region's hospitals on the following:

- Each hospital has infectious disease protocol based on standards and guidance issued by infectious disease specialists and public health agencies. Does Sutter Medical Center, Sacramento have any plans to summarize these procedures, and the core functions of public health preparedness, for the public?
- Although hospitals are generally prepared for a variety of infectious disease outbreaks, I believe special care must be taken in this case to ensure that the hospitals are prepared specifically for Ebola. Although it is unlikely a case would present in Sacramento, extra efforts to design protocols specifically for Ebola will go a long way to mitigate public concern and best practices will be applicable to future potential outbreaks. How have best practices, particularly from the Ebola scare at Kaiser Permanente, been documented and

disseminated? What is the hospital's plan to continue to document and share best practices and lessons learned?

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- Alleviating concerns of the public is very important to most effectively control and manage this outbreak. The public needs to understand what the risks are, and when to be concerned enough to present to the health care system. How are staff trained to speak with patients about Ebola? Does Sutter Medical Center, Sacramento have a plan to articulate its infectious disease protocols and procedures to the public? Do the regional hospitals, in coordination with the Public Health Department, have a plan to educate the public on the disease?
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- What else can the federal government do to provide you with the resources to successfully combat Ebola?

Again, thank you for actively participating in this dialogue. I know you are committed to continuing to provide high quality health care services to our region. I appreciate Sutter Medical Center, Sacramento's continued transparency on this issue and willingness to work together to ensure robust preparedness now and in the future. I look forward to your thoughtful responses and to continue addressing concerns and challenges with you.

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Olivia Kasirye, M.D., Public Health Officer, Sacramento County

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October 15, 2014

Ms. Ann Madden Rice
Chief Executive Officer
UC Davis Health Systems
2315 Stockton Boulevard Administration #1501
Sacramento, California 95817

Dear Ms. Madden Rice,

As you are well aware, the current Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa has escalated to a public health crisis of international concern. I believe it of utmost importance that we are prepared and communicate that preparedness to our communities. Hospitals are in a unique position to act as leaders on this issue and to help demonstrate readiness.

I would like to thank Dr. Douglas Kirk and Robert Waste from UC Davis Health Systems for actively participating in the stakeholder group meeting that I convened in Sacramento last week along with the other three area hospitals, the Public Health Department, and the airport. We had a meaningful and open discussion about the procedures and protocols that are in place to protect the public from infectious disease outbreaks such as Ebola, and what would happen should a case emerge in Sacramento.

As we discussed during the meeting, our region's health care system has long been equipped for such crises, but there is always more that we can do to be vigilant and cautious. I appreciated hearing about the training and drilling occurring in your health system to consistently update your staff on best practices, including appropriate procedures and protocol and maneuvering personal protective equipment (PPE). I am encouraged that the region's hospitals have been coordinating with each other under the leadership of the Sacramento County Public Health Department. It will take all pieces of the system working together and "over-communicating" to achieve proper preparedness.

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- What else can the federal government do to provide you with the resources to successfully combat Ebola?

Again, thank you for actively participating in this dialogue. I know you are committed to continuing to provide high quality health care services to our region. I appreciate UC Davis Health System's continued transparency on this issue and willingness to work together to ensure robust preparedness now and in the future. I look forward to your thoughtful responses and to continue addressing concerns and challenges with you.

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Member of Congress

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Erica Murray, President and Chief Executive Officer, California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems
Olivia Kasirye, M.D., Public Health Officer, Sacramento County