



October 30, 2014
Contact: Tom Schlueter
(630) 444-3098
630-417-9129 (cell)
www.kanehealth.com

Exercises help Kane County plan its response to Ebola risk

The Kane County Health Department hosted two table-top exercises recently as a way to test the abilities of the county and its partners to respond to a potential case of Ebola in Kane County.

On Oct. 22, the Health Department worked with other county departments and offices to test these abilities. Participating were the Kane County Sheriff's Office, the Kane County State's Attorney's Office, the Kane County Coroner's Office, the Kane County Office of Emergency Management and Kane County Emergency Communications (Kane Comm—911 center). On Oct. 29, The Health Department hosted local health care providers including Presence Mercy Medical Center, Presence St. Joseph Medical Center, Advocate Sherman Hospital, Northwestern Cadence (Delnor) Hospital, Heartland Blood Center, Aunt Martha's, as well as the Kane County Sheriff's Office, Kane County Coroner's Office and Kane County Office of Emergency Management.

The purpose of the exercises was to identify gaps, and address issues in the county's response in the event a Kane County resident is diagnosed with Ebola, said Kane County Health Department Executive Director Barbara Jeffers.

"This was a good time to get everybody together to discuss the countywide response. We intend to keep in close contact and continue the communications within the county and with our partners," Jeffers said.

During the exercises, the group is presented with a "scenario" that provides several developments that might occur if there were an Ebola case in Kane. The participants were asked how their agency would respond to each step of the scenario.

(More)

Among some of the topics that were discussed: When would the Health Department first receive notification that a resident arrived at O'Hare Airport and was being quarantined; legal questions surrounding HIPAA; health care worker personal protection equipment; protocols involving transporting patients; patient monitoring; and keeping the Health Department and health care providers up-to-date on the evolving guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Illinois Department of Public Health. The idea of the exercises was not to solve every problem or answer every question. The goal was to raise questions that others may not have thought of yet.

"We got a good start with these exercises," Jeffers said. "We know that each incident will be unique in its own way, but by working together with our county partners we are building a foundation to build our response to an emergency."

###