Update on BJH/WUSM preparedness October 16, 2014

Barnes-Jewish Hospital and Washington University leadership want to ensure that we keep you updated on the plan for any patients with known or suspected Ebola. We currently have no cases of known or suspected Ebola at BJH. In an effort to keep you updated, we would like to answer some of the most common questions we have heard around the medical center over the past few days.

How are we identifying patients with known or suspected Ebola?
Screening is the first line of defense in identifying people who may have Ebola or may have been exposed to Ebola. At all high-risk BJH/WUSM portals of entry including the emergency department (ED), Pregnancy Assessment Center and Center for Outpatient Health clinics, patients are being screened for travel history within the past 21 days and possible symptoms. This same screening is occurring through the Doctors Access Line before accepting any transfer patients from other facilities. In addition, the BJC Medical Group and the Washington University Faculty Practice Plan physicians are utilizing screening protocols in their clinics. At this point, there is no indication for screening outside of these locations since it is through these particular portals of entry where high-risk patients will most likely present.

Where will we place known or suspected Ebola patients?
Patients presenting to the hospital will be initially assessed in the Emergency Department. Physicians assessing symptomatic patients in the clinic setting on the academic campus should call the ID consult line at 747-3535 for further direction. Patients requiring inpatient admission will go to 84 ICU.

How are we educating staff who may be involved in caring for patients with known or suspected Ebola?
All staff members who may be involved in caring for a patient with known or suspected Ebola will be trained based on current CDC guidelines. Patient contact will be limited to essential personnel only. Staff who will be working with these patients (nursing, physicians and ancillary staff) will be getting direction from Infection Prevention on how to properly place and remove the personal protective equipment (PPE) and will have the opportunity to practice this over the next few days. Staff caring for the patient will utilize the buddy system when placing/removing the PPE to make sure there are no breaks in process. Infection Prevention specialists will also be there in person to help support the staff in those areas.

Why are different organizations shown on the national news using different versions of Personal Protective Equipment?
The specialized biocontainment facilities in Omaha, Bethesda, Atlanta and Montana have protocols based on dealing with infections where the route of transmission is unknown or airborne. These biocontainment facilities have trained to their specific protocols and do not deviate from this. The transmission route for Ebola is well known to be direct contact with body fluids via mucous membranes or non-intact skin and our Infectious Diseases experts have ensured that our protocols protect our staff against Ebola transmission based on most recent national guidelines.

How can I get more information about Ebola?
We will be providing frequent email updates to you. In addition, you can access more information at the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola.