

LEGAL UPDATES

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CDC Issues Guidance for Colleges and Universities on Ebola Outbreak in West Africa

On August 29, 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published recommendations concerning the Ebola outbreak in West Africa and how it affects institutions of higher education.

Here are some highlights from the CDC publication:

CDC advises postponing all education-related travel to Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone until further notice.

CDC did not advise against non-essential travel to Nigeria, though it may as the situation evolves. CDC suggests colleges and universities consider this possibility when determining whether to proceed with education-related travel to Nigeria.

While it is impossible to predict how long it will take to get the outbreak under control, CDC's recommendation to avoid non-essential travel will remain in effect for as long as the outbreak lasts and could realistically continue into the spring semester.

CDC does not recommend colleges and universities isolate or quarantine student, faculty or staff based on travel history alone.

Institutions should identify students, faculty and staff who have been in these countries in the past 21 days and conduct a risk assessment on each to determine his or her level of risk exposure.

If anyone has had a high-risk or low-risk exposure, public health authorities should be notified and consulted for guidance and the identified person(s) should be medically evaluated.

CDC's advice in its entirety can be found on the CDC website.

What This Means to You

Until CDC states differently, colleges and universities should reconsider any education-related travel plans to West Africa. Institutions should also take steps to identify campus community members who have been in Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone or Nigeria in the past 21 days, assess their level of risk, and take additional steps as necessary.