

Date: October 13, 2014

To: All School of Medicine and Graduate School of Nursing Students

From: Michael Kneeland, MD  
Interim Associate Dean for Student Affairs, School of Medicine

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Dean, Graduate School of Nursing

Re: Student involvement in the care of patients with Isolation Precautions

As you know, health care officials across the globe are focusing not only on the treatment of patients with the Ebola virus, but also on containing its spread. In our own country the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and local public health officials have been actively engaged in advising health care facilities and their clinicians on the early recognition of patients with suspected Ebola virus and processes that should be implemented to prevent its transmission to health care workers providing care to these patients. Of course, it is important that these clinicians meticulously follow established and detailed processes to assure that they themselves do not become infected, possibly exposing others to the virus as well.

Consistent with the above, **it is preferable to have specially dedicated teams of health care workers with specific training on Ebola virus isolation procedures taking care of these patients.** This will help to assure that there is no variation in the required processes reducing the likelihood of a breach in protocols.

Given that students have transient assignments to their various clinical rotations, it is less practical for them to have this necessary training. **Therefore, at this time we are directing that students not be assigned to direct contact with patients admitted to the hospital because of suspected or confirmed Ebola virus infection.**

It is understood that in various outpatient settings, students may be engaged in the care of patients for whom Ebola virus infection may become part of the differential diagnosis. In those settings, students are to follow the procedures implemented by the care team at that specific clinic or emergency department location. It is also understood that residents and fellows are to carry on with their responsibilities as before, in accordance with the directions from their own team.

This decision was made after careful consideration and discussions with the senior leadership, and may be revisited as the situation evolves and training efforts expand.