

Letter to Pitt-Johnstown Community about Ebola and Other Health Matters

October 28, 2014

Dear Pitt-Johnstown Community Members:

All of us have seen the news reports recently regarding Ebola, a disease currently afflicting a few West African nations. Over the past several weeks, there have been a few, known cases in the United States. To date, cases in this country have been limited to individuals who contracted the disease in Liberia and health care workers who treated infected patients in the U.S.

Barring some mutation or other unforeseen eventuality, the chances of any member of the Pitt-Johnstown community contracting this illness are near negligible, infinitesimally low. Therefore, I trust that our community will put things in context and their proper perspective, notwithstanding the headlines or the images unfolding on the television.

Understanding and knowledge, we believe, lead to the most informed and prudent actions and perspectives. To that end, I invite you to explore valuable information on the following websites:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/qa.html>
- National Institutes of Health:
<http://www.nih.gov/health/ebola.htm>
- Pennsylvania Department of Health:
<http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=514&objID=1904738&mode=2>

Whether it is Ebola or the norovirus of yesteryear, our goal, as always, is to do everything we can to protect the health and well-being of our entire campus community. Incidentally, we do not presently have any students at Pitt-Johnstown from the countries currently struggling with Ebola. While Ebola is a deadly and serious disease, there are, quite frankly, more immediate and greater dangers that merit more of our attention. Now is a great time for all of us to pay even closer attention to time-tested standard practices that improve our health and well-being as well as the overall public health. For one, during this flu season, health professionals encourage us all to do things like, washing hands, etc.

Please remember that our Office of Health and Counseling Services (ext. 7119), located in the Student Union, is available for all students. Please direct any questions to this Office, or alert them if you believe you are at risk or have been exposed to this disease.

With Best Wishes,
Jem Spectar, Ph.D.
President