



*County of Berks*

**COUNTY OF BERKS**  
**PENNSYLVANIA**

**County of Berks**

**Services Center, 13th Floor, 633 Court Street, Reading, PA 19601-4310**

**For Immediate Release: Thursday, October 16, 2014**

**Contact: Carl E. Geffken, Chief Operating Officer**

**Phone: (610) 478-6136 Ext. 5**

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

Reading, PA – The Commissioners of the County of Berks have directed, through the Berks County Department of Emergency Services 9-1-1 Communications Center, that the County begin screening requests for emergency medical service response (EMS) for Ebola Virus Disease related risks. This screening will consist of two very brief questions that callers will be asked to assess risk for this potentially infectious illness. This process dovetails with the County's long-standing policy of screening EMS calls for the risk of potentially infectious respiratory illnesses.

These questions, relating to whether the patient has a fever, and whether they have travelled, or have been in close contact with someone who has travelled to an area where there is a known outbreak of the disease (currently West Africa), are in concert with United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Pennsylvania Department of Health (DoH) recommendations. The intent of these questions is to provide advance notice to emergency responders that additional personal protective clothing, beyond that normally worn when responding to an EMS call, may be required before patient contact is made. It also ensures that personnel in the emergency care unit of the hospital who will be receiving the patient can be given ample notice to prepare for the patient's arrival.

Along with notice of the screening process, the County has offered to our local emergency response personnel, recommendations relating to response actions, and the cleaning and return to service of medical equipment and vehicles. These actions are timely, and serve to protect our first responder and first receiver community and the public at large. As the global, national, and local threat situation changes, the County will continue to work hand-in-hand with our local hospitals in reviewing CDC and DoH guidance in order to modify local procedures.

A measured, clear, and consistent community-wide response to this emerging threat will assure the citizens of and visitors to Berks County that our 9-1-1, emergency response, and hospital systems will remain available and prepared to service their needs safely and efficiently.

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