



**For Immediate Release**

## **DHEC, MUSC announce plan for possible Ebola patients**

### **The Medical University of South Carolina will accept patients as needed**

**Charleston, S.C. (Oct. 16, 2014)** – The medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) and S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) announced that MUSC has agreed to serve as the state’s hub for treatment of patients with an Ebola diagnosis, should a patient need transportation to the academic medical center. MUSC Medical Center CEO/Executive Director Patrick Cawley, M.D., MUSC Chief Quality Officer Danielle Scheurer, M.D., and DHEC Director Catherine Templeton held a press conference at MUSC in the Ashley River Tower facility to mark this agreement and address the current health crisis. MUSC has a five bed unit ready to care for any infectious disease patient. DHEC has been in close contact with MUSC leadership while monitoring the situation in West Africa and now in the U.S.

“South Carolina has a world class trauma system that includes MUSC, Greenville Hospital and Palmetto Health. While every hospital in this state, rural or metropolitan, is ready to identify and isolate suspected cases, we are taking care of ourselves by identifying trauma level one hospitals that are ready, willing and able to treat people sick with Ebola,” Templeton said. “MUSC has a team of experts who have volunteered to be the boots on the ground for South Carolinians.”

MUSC has been reaching out to specially recruited staff with trainings and updates, as well as internal newsletters and email communication for those not directly involved with patient care. Situations such as this cause anxiety and fear, and SCDHEC and MUSC staff have been prepared for numerous other, related situations, and stand ready to evolve along with the current situation.

“Our goal today is to make sure those we serve know that we are doing what we can to remain vigilant, measured and compassionate in how we respond to this evolving health crisis. It’s important that our community, our state, and our nation know we are prepared and ready to help, and will continue to seek out evolving best practices here at MUSC to care for a person afflicted with this disease,” Cawley said.

Scheurer offered practical advice for people seeking ways to prevent the spread of the virus, strongly encouraging seemingly simple measures such as practicing good hygiene and remaining calm

as changes in the crisis occur. She encouraged the community to continue to monitor the latest CDC and WHO recommendations regarding prevention and controlling the spread of the virus.

MUSC will continue to follow and monitor CDC and WHO protocols assessing patients who present with fever, sweats and/or chills and have traveled to West Africa within the last three weeks. While it is unlikely, should such a patient come to MUSC Medical Center, a specific predetermined sequence of actions and precautions would occur, consistent with the CDC-issued recommendations. The patient would immediately be placed in isolation, possibly in an intensive care room. Caregivers would use appropriate personal protective equipment, including clothing, gloves, and eye gear. The identification of such a case would also trigger a series of immediate notifications to key hospital leadership, faculty and staff, which would include infectious diseases and infection prevention, as well as prompt notification of SCDHEC for specialized testing and investigation of contacts. The physicians and nurses who would likely provide bedside care for this patient have already volunteered and are receiving specific and up to date information about this virus and MUSC protocols.

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#### **About MUSC**

Founded in 1824 in Charleston, The Medical University of South Carolina is the oldest medical school in the South. Today, MUSC continues the tradition of excellence in education, research, and patient care. MUSC educates and trains more than 3,000 students and residents, and has nearly 13,000 employees, including approximately 1,500 faculty members. As the largest non-federal employer in Charleston, the university and its affiliates have collective annual budgets in excess of \$1.7 billion. MUSC operates a 750-bed medical center, which includes a nationally recognized Children's Hospital, the Ashley River Tower (cardiovascular, digestive disease, and surgical oncology), Hollings Cancer Center (one of 66 National Cancer Institute designated centers) Level I Trauma Center and Institute of Psychiatry. For more information on academic information or clinical services, visit [www.musc.edu](http://www.musc.edu). For more information on hospital patient services, visit [www.muschealth.com](http://www.muschealth.com).