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To (in bcc:): National IHR Focal Point Offices (NFPO) and, through the NFPO, to national competent authorities in charge of preparedness and response to Ebola virus disease

To (in bcc:): National Public Health Laboratories, or equivalent, in charge of the international shipment of samples for Ebola virus disease diagnosis

Cc (in bcc:): PAHO/WHO CHA Focal Points

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28 August 2014

Dear Colleagues,

This is to inform you about the procedures for submitting samples for testing for Ebola virus infection to the **WHO Collaborating Centre (WHO CC)** for Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers at the Viral Special Pathogens Branch (VSPB), Division of High Consequence Pathogens and Pathology (DHCPP), National Center for Emerging Zoonotic Infectious Diseases (NCEZID), **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Atlanta GA, United States.**

Please note that these procedures are the result of consultation between PAHO/WHO and the WHO CC at CDC, taking into account the 24/7 procedures established by CDC to provide international assistance in relation to the current Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in West Africa.

- Should a patient with a clinically and epidemiologically compatible illness with Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) be detected, the WHO IHR Regional Contact Point at PAHO/WHO (Email (24/7): [ihr@paho.org](mailto:ihr@paho.org), Tel. (24/7): +1 202 368 8929) should immediately be informed through the National IHR Focal Point (NFP).
- A teleconference between national authorities (epidemiologist/s, clinician/s, laboratory staff), the WHO CC at CDC, and PAHO/WHO will be set up within a max of 12 hours and the NFP will be notified about the connection details by email and telephone. The teleconference will require calling an international number in the United States, set up by CDC for this purpose.
- The purpose of the tripartite teleconference is to perform a thorough assessment of the clinical and epidemiological history of the patient for whom EVD diagnosis is considered, to appraise its likelihood, and decide whether laboratory tests for EVD are warranted.
- The WHO CC at CDC requests that the tripartite consultation occurs before obtaining samples from the individual/s for whom EVD diagnosis is considered.



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- Should laboratory tests for EVD be warranted:
  - During the consultation, national authorities will be asked to indicate whether the results of the laboratory tests for EVD diagnosis performed by the WHO CC at CDC could also be shared with PAHO/WHO;
  - Additional information and forms to be completed prior and for the shipment are included in the enclosed documents provided by the WHO CC at CDC:
    1. Frequently Asked Questions regarding Ebola Virus Specimen Collection and Shipment;
    2. CDC Requirements for the Importation of CRITICAL Laboratory Samples into the United States;
    3. Instructions for submitting Diagnostic Specimens to CDC's Viral Special Pathogens Branch, including the Specimen Submission Form;
    4. Shipper's Declaration of Dangerous Goods.
- The WHO IHR Regional Contact Point at PAHO/WHO will be providing to national authorities, through the NFP, the US Public Health Service Importation Permit needed to proceed with the shipment – enclosed an example (5. Example\_Permit to Import Infectious Biological Agents, Infectious Substances, and Vectors).
- Samples must be sent as a “Suspect Category A infectious substance” under regulations of UN2814 6.2, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA) standards and packed by personnel with international IATA certification for shipping and handling (enclosed 6. Packing Instructions). As part of the preparedness process, IATA certified personnel should be identified and easily accessible to authorities responsible for the shipment.
- The package should be addressed to:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
ATTN STAT LAB: VSPB, UNIT #70  
1600 Clifton Road NE  
Atlanta, GA 30333  
Tel.: +1 770 488 7100  
Email: [eocevent246@cdc.gov](mailto:eocevent246@cdc.gov)
- The international transportation of samples should be done by IATA certified carriers. This requires preparations in advance.
  - Arrangements between national authorities and any IATA certified carriers / airlines are acceptable. Information about the selected carrier should be provided during the tripartite teleconference in case the shipment of the sample/s to the WHO CC at CDC is warranted;
- Within the framework of the existing agreement between WHO and World Courier, enclosed is the list of countries and territories where World Courier is operating, specifying the local capacities of the representatives (7. AMRO\_World Courier\_Shipping capacity). Within that framework, PAHO/WHO would directly cover the cost of the shipment. To be optimally prepared, authorities



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who wish to use World Courier as carrier should establish the necessary contacts with the local World Courier representative. If, during the tripartite teleconference, the shipment of samples to the WHO CC at CDC is agreed upon, national authorities should indicate that World Courier will be activated to proceed with the shipment. The availability of this information during the tripartite teleconference is critical for PAHO/WHO to activate the payment of the shipment.

- In countries and territories where World Courier is not operating, taking into account the enclosed Electronic Bulletin by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), dated 21 August 2014 (8. ICAO\_EB 2014/57), health and Civil Aviation Authorities should approach airlines operating in their jurisdiction to ensure that samples can be shipped.
- In case national authorities, following exhaustive explorations of local options for the shipment, determine that by no means the international shipment would be possible should inform Dr Jairo Mendez (Email: [ricoj@paho.org](mailto:ricoj@paho.org); Tel.: +1 202 974 3070).
- Please note that, at present, the WHO CC at CDC is not in a position to engage with mock shipments.

Should there be the need to substantially modify these procedures, changes will be communicated immediately through these same channels.

For any doubt or question regarding the international shipment, please do not hesitate to contact:

- Dr Jairo Mendez (Email: [ricoj@paho.org](mailto:ricoj@paho.org), Tel.: +1 202 974 3070)
- Dr Roberta Andraghetti (Email: [andragro@paho.org](mailto:andragro@paho.org), Tel.: +1 202 974 3129).

Kindest regards

Jairo Mendez and Roberta Andraghetti

Enclosures: Eight (8)