Hello, my name is Dr. Marissa Levine. I'm Virginia's State Health Commissioner. I'm speaking with you on October 28, Tuesday and I'd like to spend just a couple of minutes to give an update on Ebola preparedness in Virginia.

I am personally committed to making sure that Virginia is as prepared as it can be to decrease the impact of Ebola. I'm happy to say today that we do not have Ebola in Virginia as of October 28th. And I just wanted to spend a moment and talk about the disease. What's really clear, and what I think has been proven even here in the United States, is that we know that the Ebola virus does not get transmitted from people who are not sick. So you can only get Ebola if you are in direct contact with an individual who is sick with Ebola and only if you come into contact with their bodily fluids.

My heart goes out to all the people in West Africa and here in the United States who've had to deal with Ebola. We lost Thomas Duncan to Ebola in Dallas. The only good news that came out of that was that his family, who were quarantined for 21 days, have come out of quarantine and they're well. And so those were individuals who lived with Mr. Duncan but they did not get sick and I think that really drives home the point that we've been making is that you can't easily pick up Ebola. Even being in the same room necessarily does not make you at risk of getting Ebola.

The other thing that's important to know is that we're dealing with an unprecedented outbreak in West Africa and the best way to protect people in the United States is to make sure that that outbreak is contained. So,I have personally committed to keeping our health care providers, EMS personnel, hospital doctors, nurses, dentists updated on everything that we know about Virginia Ebola that there's a lot of activity going on in our health care system to assure that we're better prepared every day.

Many of you know that Dulles is a receiving airport for people who've come from that country (not necessarily directly, they usually travel through other airports) but ever since October 16th there's been enhanced screening going on for anybody who originated in the three countries that are affected. That's Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia in West Africa. And what we've done here in Virginia just this week is added an additional protective step using our local health department professionals to make contact with every one of those travelers who have come back over the recent past to make sure that we know what their health status is and help to determine what their potential risk of developing Ebola is. Now, this is primarily an opportunity just to be sure that they know what they need to do and we know how they're doing and that they have somebody to call should their situation change and that we can seamlessly help them work through the maze of the health care system effectively to get prompt attention should they get sick. We'll monitor all of those people for a 21 day period after they come back from those three countries.

Some of those people might have been health care workers and some of those health care workers might be at higher risk for Ebola and we will work directly with those individuals to limit their exposure to others and work with them in the most appropriate way possible under the laws that Virginia provides. The good news, and the General Assembly in Virginia was wise to revisit this issue, but we do have laws in Virginia that allow the Health Commissioner to implement orders of isolation or quarantine if needed. Isolation would refer to somebody who's sick who needs to be separated from the community and if we did have an Ebola patient that person would be in the hospital.

Other people might be exposed, but could develop symptoms within that 21 day period while Ebola is incubating and those are the people who if we had to I could issue an order of quarantine and I wouldn't hesitate to do so if it was needed to protect the public's health. I think that will not be likely but we'll

know better by being in close contact with all of these travelers to understand what their situation is and what their risk to the community might be.

And I also wanted to make sure people knew how they could get more information. Clearly if they have an issue (a health care issue) they should talk directly to their health care provider and I think our health care providers are well informed on the issue, but if you do have a general question we've setup a hotline that you can call through Virginia's state system. It's 1-877-275-8343. I'll repeat that 1-877-275-8343. But I'll emphasize that if you have a health issue you should talk to your health care provider and if you do have a question about what we're doing in public health in Virginia our local health departments are also available to answer those questions.

The last thing I'll ask you to do is to prepare now for flu season, because we're going into that season now. And flu and Ebola have very similar symptoms. It really can help us minimize any confusion that might come down, particularly among people who travel from those countries. But it's a good idea anyway to take inventory now about what you need to do for you and your family to prevent flu because it will be here and unfortunately flu still is a deadly disease and affects many more people than Ebola has to date. So with that, I would ask you to think about good hygienic practices, good nutrition, and flu vaccinations for you and your family. And with that I'll end again thank you. I think we're working very well together in Virginia we will have to continue to work closely together and I encourage you to reach out and ask your questions because we have lots of people who are willing to help. Thank you very much.