Dear Colleagues:

While there are no confirmed or suspected cases of Ebola Virus Disease in California, today Governor Brown and the California Health and Human Services Agency will announce that all five University of California medical centers, including UCSF, have been identified as priority hospitals to treat confirmed patients with Ebola.

We at UCSF Medical Center are committed to providing the highest quality and safest care to the patients we serve, which is why so many of you - our physicians, nurses, clinical laboratory scientists and staff -- have spent a significant amount of time and thought preparing to care for a potential patient with Ebola.

In recent weeks, after much consideration, we identified a site for an isolation unit to treat any patients who may seek our care. The isolation unit is being constructed in one of the existing intensive care (ICU) units on the Mount Zion campus. The construction design and specifications were based on detailed information from the biocontainment units at Emory University and Nebraska Medical Center, two hospitals that have successfully treated patients with Ebola virus infection. The location of this unit is designed to allow for the proper facilities, equipment and resources, as well as infection control practices, to ensure patient and staff safety. A temporary isolation unit with the same specifications has already been set up in this ICU.

If UCSF receives a patient with suspected or confirmed Ebola virus infection, all other patients will be moved out of the ICU to other comparable locations at UCSF prior to the arrival of the Ebola patient.

Access to the isolation unit will then be tightly restricted and monitored by UCSF’s Environmental Health and Safety’s Emergency Response and Security Teams.

A team of our UCSF nurses, clinical lab scientists, respiratory therapists and faculty physicians have volunteered to provide care for Ebola virus infected patients. These dedicated professionals have begun intensive training on the proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE). UCSF is using the most current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for the specific personal protective equipment and processes for placement and removal.

Enhanced training is also being provided to other UCSF sites where patients may arrive on their own seeking care, including UCSF Medical Center’s Emergency Department, Acute Care Clinics, and ambulatory clinics. ED staff have received extensive training in PPE and intake procedures and have participated in a practice drill. Training and drills have been scheduled for other ambulatory sites.

Trainee physicians (residents/fellows/medical students, and nurses will not be involved in the care of these patients).

As a public university, part of our mission is to provide medical leadership during a public health crisis. We plan to work closely with the California Secretary of Health and Human Services and the California Department of Public Health as well as other providers and facilities to maintain our preparedness.

UCSF has put substantial effort into ensuring that we can provide the very highest quality and most compassionate care to patients with Ebola virus infection while safeguarding our staff, care providers, and all other patients.
UCSF Medical Center launched preparations for an Ebola response in August by establishing a task force that includes key stakeholders from Infection Control, Nursing, Critical Care Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Lab Medicine, the Safety Office and the Office of Emergency Preparedness.

Since then, UCSF leaders have worked closely with the CDC, California Department of Public Health, and the San Francisco Department of Public Health, and have consulted other institutions to gain knowledge of best practices, including Emory University and University of Nebraska.

UCSF Medical Center has established protocols for identifying patients who could arrive at the UCSF Medical Center Emergency Department and ambulatory care clinics.

We will provide more details about our preparations at today’s Town Hall which begins at noon: http://www.ucsf.edu/news/2014/10/119611/town-hall-focus-ucsf-response-ebola-epidemic

For more information about the Ebola virus please visit the UCSF Ebola resource page http://www.ucsf.edu/ebola and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website – www.cdc.gov/ebola

Sincerely,

Sam Hawgood, MBBS
Chancellor
Arthur and Toni Rembe Rock Distinguished Professor

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