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COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
October 16, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

The House Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations appreciates you making your agency officials available to testify at our hearing, "Examining the U.S. Public Health Response to the Ebola Outbreak."

By underestimating both the severity of the danger and overstating the ability of our healthcare system to handle Ebola cases, mistakes have been made. Congress stands ready to serve as a strong and solid partner in solving this crisis.

Based on what we learned through expert testimony from today's hearing, there remains confusion over the facts surrounding the cases of three known Ebola-infected patients, and contradictions about the Administration's authorities and responsibilities in controlling infectious disease outbreaks. Furthermore, the current approach to protecting Americans has proven gaps. Screening protocols rely on persons who have been exposed to an Ebola patient, or travelling to and from West African nations, to provide honest answers about their personal health. Second, temperature monitoring is not fail-safe given that fevers can be masked with analgesics. Therefore, we have identified the following measures requiring immediate action to protect the public health of Americans and stop the spread of the Ebola virus:

1. An immediate ban on non-essential commercial travel from Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone;
2. A mandatory 21-day quarantine order for any American who has treated an Ebola patient, or has traveled to and returned from, the Ebola hot zone countries. This includes a prohibition of domestic public travel regardless of assumptions that the treating professionals wore or removed all personal protective equipment properly;
3. Immediate and thorough training for U.S. healthcare and hospital workers on how to wear, use, and remove personal protective equipment in the treatment of a possible Ebola-infected patient;

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The Honorable Barack Obama

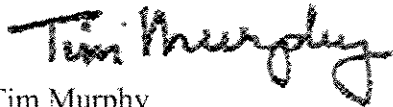
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4. Identify and designate specific medical centers equipped and trained to treat potential Ebola patients;
5. Identify gaps in statutory language preventing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other federal agencies including Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, the Food and Drug Administration, and the National Institutes of Health from taking more aggressive and immediate action to protect public health from Ebola;
6. Accelerate directives on development and deployment of clinical trials for all promising Ebola vaccines, investigational drugs, and diagnostic tests;
7. Acquisition of additional airplanes and vehicles capable of transporting American medical and military personnel who may have contracted Ebola back to the United States for treatment;
8. Additional contact tracing and testing resources for public health agencies;
9. Provide information to Congress regarding any resources needed to assist on health interventions in Africa to aggressively stop Ebola.

There is no greater responsibility for the U.S. government than to protect and defend the safety of the American people. I pledge to work with you and examine all immediate and necessary additional steps to keep the American people safe from the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

Sincerely,



Tim Murphy
Member of Congress

TM:bdg