September 5, 2014

Dear Students and Families,

As you may have heard, an American doctor serving on a medical mission in Liberia tested positive for the Ebola virus and was recently transported back to the United States for treatment. At the request of the U.S. State Department, we are currently treating this patient here at The Nebraska Medical Center’s Biocontainment Patient Care Unit located on our UNMC Campus.

We want to personally assure you that this patient’s presence on the UNMC Campus poses no risk to you, your loved ones or the staff here in the clinic.

Our medical center has one of four highly specialized and secure biocontainment units in the United States. It was built ten years ago for the purpose of containing and treating patients with infectious diseases. Our staff there is highly trained, well-respected and prepared for this.

Our biocontainment unit is a safe and appropriate location for this patient. The patient’s presence does not put anyone outside of that unit at an increased risk for exposure. The unit is sealed, guarded and secure, and it is separate from other patient care areas.

Here are some important facts about Ebola:

- It cannot be spread through the air
- It is only contagious to those who come in direct contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person
- Infection control procedures in modern American medical centers can safely prevent its spread
- The biocontainment unit is in a separate building in the hospital – it has its own staff, supplies and air handling system

We firmly believe this does not pose a risk for the rest of our students, clinics or to the community at large. Every safeguard is in place to protect our staff, our patients and their families. If you have any lingering questions or concerns, please share them with your provider during your visit. Everyone here at the clinic and across the medical center is fully committed to providing you the extraordinary care you deserve and will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

Douglas Wheatley, M.D.
Medical Director
UNMC Student Health