

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Office of the Provost

Massachusetts Hall
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

t.617.496.5100
f.617.495.8550

October 16, 2014

Dear Members of the Harvard Community,

Following our August [letter](#) about the [Ebola](#) outbreak in West Africa, we write to update you on the University's response, including the latest protocols for visitors to campus and travelers to affected countries.

Travel to Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea presents substantial risks. Our partners operating in the region report that medical evacuation is virtually impossible. Individuals who show any signs of fever, whether they have been exposed to the disease or not, face significant challenges leaving these countries and risk being quarantined together with Ebola patients. In addition, security in this region of West Africa has deteriorated, and health risks do not appear to be diminishing. For all of these reasons, **we strongly discourage travel to Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia.**

Under exceptional circumstances, if a School or unit believes Harvard-sponsored travel to these countries (e.g. with Harvard funding or as part of an academic program) is absolutely necessary, approval of the Provost, in consultation with the appropriate School dean, is required. For information on this review process please contact [Todd Washburn](#), Assistant Provost for International Affairs.

Harvard Global Support Services has issued [guidance](#) for travel to Ebola-affected regions. All travel to these countries, Harvard-sponsored or personal, must be registered with the [Harvard Travel Registry](#).

We continue to monitor Harvard faculty, staff, students, and visitors who are traveling to campus from Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia. To date we have not identified any member of our community, or any visitor to our campus, who has been deemed to be at elevated risk for Ebola. We continue to require anyone who has been in one of these West African countries in the four weeks before arriving on campus to contact [Harvard University Health Services](#) (HUHS) prior to their return. An HUHS clinician will administer a brief telephone assessment, based on [CDC](#) guidelines, to determine next steps before these individuals are permitted to arrive on campus. Travelers should also plan for the possibility that they will be asked to stay away from campus for 21 days, the duration of the incubation period of the virus.

Finally, it is early in the influenza season. According to the CDC, tens of thousands of Americans die from the flu each year. Flu vaccine reduces the risk of falling ill, so we encourage all members of the Harvard community who are able to get a flu shot to do so.

Working with experts from across the University and at our affiliated hospitals, we will continue to monitor this evolving situation and send you updates periodically. In the meantime, if you have questions, please contact Harvard University Health Services.

Sincerely,

Alan M. Garber
Provost

Paul Barreira
Director of Harvard University Health Services