Dear Emmanuel College Community:

The outbreak of Ebola virus in West Africa has attracted worldwide attention, and both international and local public health authorities are doing their best to stop the spread of the infection. The Boston Public Health Commission has responded by taking a number of precautions, including asking Boston-area colleges and universities to reach out to students, faculty, and staff returning from affected regions to discuss their travel histories and risk of Ebola exposure.

At this time, it is unlikely that Boston will be directly affected by Ebola, but the Emmanuel College Campus Preparedness Team is monitoring the outbreak and its significance for the Emmanuel community and will remain in contact with local public health authorities.

We are not aware of any Emmanuel community members who have traveled with college-sponsored programs or on their own to any of the countries involved in the Ebola outbreak, but if you have traveled to any of the affected regions within 21 days of your return to campus (Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone or Nigeria), please contact Health Services as soon as possible at 617 264-7678 to have a phone discussion about your recent trip. In the evening or on the weekend, please call Campus Safety at 617 735-9710 and ask to speak to the Health Services staff member on call.

Ebola virus can only be contracted through direct contact with the bodily fluids of someone who is ill with Ebola, or through direct contact with infected animals. Unlike influenza, it cannot be transmitted through airborne exposure. The incubation period for the virus (the time between exposure and the development of symptoms) can be as long as 21 days. During the incubation period, people are not contagious. There are currently no known cases of Ebola infection in the United States.

For more information about Ebola, please see the CDC website which provides a question and answer page, and more comprehensive information.

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