



NEWS RELEASE



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Public Health Officials Reassure Illinoisans after First Case of a Serious Virus is Identified in the U.S.

CHICAGO – The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) today announced the first case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in the U.S. The patient was on a flight last Thursday, April 24, 2014 from London to Chicago O’Hare International Airport, and then took a bus to Indiana.

“We will continue to work with the CDC and the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) concerning the MERS-CoV patient who traveled from London to Chicago and then to Indiana,” said Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck.

“The CDC, IDPH and CDPH do not consider passengers on the flight or bus to be close contacts¹ of the patient and therefore are not at high risk.”

As a precautionary measure, the CDC will contact the plane and bus passengers beginning Saturday, May 3. If the CDC identifies ill individuals with possible MERS-CoV, it will notify CDPH and IDPH.

“There is no reason to suspect any current risk to travelers or employees at O’Hare Airport at this time,” said CDPH Commissioner Bechara Choucair. “We will continue to work closely with the CDC and IDPH to protect the public's health.”

IDPH has activated the expert medical staff at Illinois Poison Center to operate the MERS-CoV hotline. Illinois residents and medical professionals who have concerns or questions should call 1-844 565-0256. For more information about MERS-CoV, including [Frequently Asked Questions](#), go to www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/MERS/.

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1. Close contact is defined as a) any person who provided care for the patient, including a healthcare worker or family member, or had similarly close physical contact; or b) any person who stayed at the same place (e.g. lived with, visited) as the patient while the patient was ill.