



# Ebola Deficiency Funding FY2015

## Request

The Governor is recommending one-time funding of \$891,000 from the General Fund in FY 2015 to cover a deficiency in the Department of Health (MDH) budget for unanticipated, statewide planning, coordination, preparation and response activities related to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

## Background

The serious nature of Ebola and the spread of the disease to the U.S. have created an unprecedented public health threat in Minnesota and other states. Although infectious disease monitoring and emergency preparedness activities are part of MDH's core services, the extent of the activities required to respond to the Ebola threat has far exceeded existing resources.

Wherever possible, MDH has redirected existing resources to cover the costs of the Ebola response. However, more than ninety percent of the funding MDH received for infectious disease and emergency preparedness activities in the current biennium is from federal funding sources. MDH receives those funds in the form of competitive and formula-based federal grants that obligate the Department to perform a variety of public health activities unrelated to the Ebola response.

## Funding Restrictions

With limited state funding for this activity and significant restrictions on federal funds, MDH has limited flexibility to redirect resources to respond to the unanticipated public health threats.

Responding to a public health emergency on this scale was not anticipated in MDH's base funding. Protecting the public from an Ebola infection has become the top priority for more than 25 staff at the Department, who were pulled from other federally-funded activities and ordered to focus exclusively

on Ebola-related response activities. MDH staff diverted into the Ebola-response still have numerous federally-funded responsibilities unrelated to Ebola that must be completed in 2015.

MDH's budget request will not add additional FTEs but will be used to pay for existing staff to complete federally-required activities.

## Ebola Response Activities

MDH has engaged in full-time, health status monitoring of 216 individuals (as of 1/11/2015) who arrived in Minnesota from West Africa and posed a potential Ebola infection risk to the public. Four of these individuals displayed Ebola-like symptoms in emergency departments, requiring round-the-clock testing, monitoring and responses by MDH and hospital staff.

MDH has continued to work closely with health care, hospitals, providers, local public health agencies and other stakeholders in a massive level of statewide planning, coordination, preparation and response activities related to Ebola.

Public Health Lab activities include maintaining the capacity to test specimens for Ebola on a 24/7 basis, implementation of the Ebola Zaire Detection assay to test suspect patient samples, and conducting exercises to identify gaps in the entire testing process. The Lab has also incurred costs with supplies and PPE.