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Health officials, community leaders educate about Ebola

Annie Baxter · Brooklyn Park, Minn. · Oct 26, 2014

Health

Public health officials in Minnesota are working with Twin Cities West African community leaders to educate the public on how the deadly Ebola virus spreads.

Aaron Devries is a medical epidemiologist with the Minnesota Department of Health. He spoke to a crowd Saturday night at a public information meeting in Brooklyn Park, home to a large community of West African immigrants.

Devries said a person can only pass Ebola to others if he or she is sick.

"Very also importantly, it's quite difficult to become infected. Someone actually has to have direct contact with the blood and body fluids of someone who is sick with Ebola. They also have to be in a place where Ebola is circulating, and right now that is really confined to three countries, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea," he said.

At the meeting, leaders of West African cultural groups urged community members not to travel to countries stricken by Ebola.

People with family in Liberia, Sierra Leone or Guinea might also want to dissuade relatives from traveling from those countries to Minnesota, said Clarence Yaskey, who is with the Minnesota Africans against Ebola Task Force.

"We can all do our part to ensure that our relatives, if they have to come, they abide by the 21-day active monitoring. And if they do not have to come, they can postpone the visit, it might be a few hundred bucks of changing the flight, but let's be safe than sorry," Yaskey said.

Sunday, Governor Mark Dayton will meet with the state's Commissioner of Health to review Minnesota's Ebola preparedness.

The Minnesota Department of Health will begin monitoring travelers arriving into the state from Ebola-affected countries.

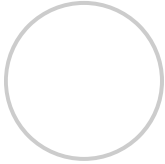
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