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NEWS RELEASE



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ANA Supports CDC Guidance, Not Mandatory Quarantine for Health Care Professionals Returning from Treating Ebola Patients in West Africa

Statement: Attributable to ANA President Pamela Cipriano, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN

SILVER SPRING, MD – “The American Nurses Association (ANA) opposes the mandatory quarantine of health care professionals who return to the United States from West African nations where Ebola is widespread. ANA supports registered nurse Kaci Hickox, who recently returned to the United States after treating Ebola patients in Sierra Leone, in her challenge of a 21-day quarantine imposed by state officials in Maine, her home state. Hickox arrived at Newark airport on Oct. 24 and was immediately quarantined in a hospital tent by New Jersey state officials, who eventually allowed her to travel to Maine via private transport on Oct. 27. After testing negative twice for Ebola, nurse Hickox, who continues to be symptom free, poses no public threat yet is restricted to her home.

ANA, along with the American Hospital Association and American Medical Association, supports [the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s \(CDC\) guidance](#) based on the best available scientific evidence. The CDC guidance would not require a mandatory 21-day quarantine of Hickox given risk levels outlined by the CDC in her particular case. ANA urges authorities to refrain from imposing more restrictive conditions than indicated in the CDC guidelines, which will only raise the level of fear and misinformation that currently exists.

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ANA supports a policy of appropriate monitoring for health care workers who have cared for or been in contact with patients with Ebola. Those who are not exhibiting symptoms of illness consistent with Ebola do not require quarantine. Monitoring should follow recommendations outlined by the CDC based on risk levels and the presence or absence of symptoms, including regular monitoring of body temperature and oversight by a public health agency. If symptoms do occur, the appropriate next step is isolation and transport to a medical facility for further evaluation. ANA seeks to balance protection of public health and safety with individual liberties. Policies to protect the public from the transmission of Ebola must be based on evidence and science, not fear.

Mandatory quarantine for individuals who do not have symptoms or risk factors is not backed by science. Such actions undermine efforts to recruit sufficient numbers of volunteer nurses and other health care professionals, who are essential to help contain the spread of the disease in West Africa.

ANA's position emphasizing evidence and science as the foundation for decision-making extends to proposals to ban travel to the United States from West African nations affected by the Ebola outbreak. There is no evidence to suggest that a travel ban would be effective; public health experts oppose it. In fact, a ban could be counterproductive, encouraging individuals to try to circumvent reporting and other systems. ANA supports the current requirement that those traveling to the U.S. from affected nations in West Africa, including health care professionals who have provided care to Ebola patients, once they have passed initial screening, engage in monitoring according to CDC guidelines and reporting to their respective public health agencies."

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ANA is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 3.1 million registered nurses through its constituent and state nurses associations and its organizational affiliates. ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting the rights of nurses in the workplace, projecting a positive and realistic view of nursing, and by lobbying the Congress and regulatory agencies on health care issues affecting nurses and the public.

