Gov. Scott Issues Executive Order Requiring Mandatory Health Monitoring for Anyone Returning from Ebola-Affected Areas

Governor Calls on DOH to Determine Risk Level for Returning Citizens, in Absence of CDC Info.

LAKELAND, Fla. – Today, Governor Rick Scott signed an Executive Order mandating twice-daily 21-day health monitoring for people returning from CDC designated Ebola-affected areas.

Governor Scott said, “This executive order will give the Florida Department of Health the authority they need to conduct 21-day health monitoring and risk assessments for all those who have returned or will return to Florida from the CDC designated Ebola-affected areas of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. We have asked the CDC to identify the risk levels of all returning individuals from these areas, but they have not provided that information. Therefore, we are moving quickly to require the four individuals who have returned to Florida already – and anyone in the future who will return to Florida from an Ebola area – to take part in twice daily 21-day health evaluations with DOH personnel.

“I want to be clear that we are taking this aggressive action at the state level out of an abundance of caution in the absence of much-needed Ebola risk classification information from the CDC. We are using what information is available to our Department of Health through the CDC’s Epi-X web-based system, which monitors individuals who travel to areas with infectious diseases, including Ebola. Using this system, we know that four individuals have already returned to Florida after traveling to Ebola-affected areas. Following the news of Dr. Craig Spencer testing positive for Ebola in New York, DOH began working to identify anyone who has already returned to Florida after traveling to an Ebola area and is aggressively investigating how much risk these individuals pose for contracting the disease. We will take further action to protect the health of these individuals, and our communities, if we determine any of them are at a
‘high risk’ of contracting the disease. Further action by the Florida Department of Health will include mandatory quarantine of anyone we suspect is at high-risk of testing positive for Ebola due to the type of contact they had with the disease.

“Mandatory twice-daily health monitoring will help us obtain important information that will assist us in caring for the Floridians who are returning to our state and preventing any spread of this deadly disease if one of these individuals ever develops possible Ebola symptoms within 21 days of their return. Again, we are glad we do not have a case of Ebola in Florida, but we will continue to do everything in our power to ensure we never do.”

Governor Scott's full executive order is available here.

Governor Scott’s mandate to the Florida Department of Health today mirrors the Department of Defense’s post-deployment requirements for military men and women deployed in Ebola-affected areas.

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