Dear OHIO students planning to study or travel abroad,

The Office of Global Opportunities (OGO) has been monitoring the reports of outbreaks of the Ebola virus disease (EVD) in West Africa as it pertains to study abroad program travel. The Ebola outbreak has yet to be successfully controlled in Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention have issued a level 3 Travel Warning recommending that travelers avoid non-essential travel to those three countries. In accordance with CDC recommendations, Ohio University does not sponsor study abroad program travel to these locations nor does OHIO recommend students travel to these countries at this time.

Senegal, Mali and Nigeria have also had cases of EVD, but have been identified by the CDC as containing its spread and are now Ebola-free. OHIO plans to move forward with sponsoring a study abroad program to Senegal during summer 2015. Students considering travel to Nigeria or Mali should give serious consideration to this endeavor and review health and safety information available from the CDC, the State Department, and International SOS, a security firm with which the university contracts for access to security resources and information.

There were also EVD cases identified in the United States and in Spain that received publicity because EVD was transmitted in those countries. In both cases, healthcare workers were infected while caring for an imported case. Although apparent isolated incidents occur, no community spread is ongoing in the United States or Spain. Ohio University-affiliated travel to Spain and within the United States is continuing.

Another EVD outbreak unconnected with that in West Africa occurred in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); that outbreak was declared over on November 15, 2014. Ohio University does not currently sponsor study abroad programming to the DRC. Students who may choose to travel to this location on their own should give serious consideration to this endeavor and review health and safety information available from the CDC, the State Department, and International SOS.

It is understandable that those traveling may be concerned about the safety of air travel. While EVD has the potential to spread from person to person, according to the World Health Organization and other resources, the risk of transmission of Ebola virus during air travel remains low. The Ebola Virus can only be spread through direct contact with the body fluids of a person who is sick or symptomatic with the disease.

OGO and other campus officials will continue to monitor EVD activity coverage and will communicate changes if the spread of the virus heightens to a level that is likely to put travelers at risk.

If you are traveling in the near future, we encourage you to sign up for informational e-mails about your destination from International SOS. Please visit http://www.internationalsos.com/members_home/login/login.cfm and use the shared Ohio University membership number (11BCAS000010) as your member login. After log in, you'll be able to request email updates about your specific destination. Other resources related to health
and safety and education abroad can be found at
http://www.ohio.edu/educationabroad/General/healthsafety.html.

The most up-to-date information on EVD can be found through the following resources:

- Centers for Disease Control: http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/
- State Department: http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/Ebola.html

Please don’t hesitate to contact us with questions or concerns at 740-593-4583.
Sincerely,
Office of Global Opportunities