

Thank you to all of our partners who joined the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Ebola call for Faith- and Community-based Organizations. Below is a summary of the call. If you have additional questions, please visit www.cdc.gov or contact CDC INFO by [email](#) or phone (1-800-CDC-INFO or 1-800-323-4636).

Summary of Dr. Santibañez' Presentation

Dr. Scott Santibañez, of CDC's Office of Infectious Diseases, Division of Preparedness and Emerging Infections, discussed some of his experiences regarding his sharing information with communities and neighborhoods in Dallas. Dr. Santibañez summarized several important points about Ebola highlighted below:

- A person with the Ebola virus must show symptoms to spread the disease. If they don't have any symptoms, they aren't contagious.
- The Ebola virus does not spread through the air. Ebola is spread through direct contact with blood or body fluids (for example urine, feces,) of a person who is sick with Ebola.
 - You cannot get Ebola simply by being in the same neighborhood or area as someone with Ebola.
- Ebola affects many systems in the body. The symptoms of Ebola include high fever, muscle pain, diarrhea, nausea, stomach pain. If someone is sick with Ebola, they will lose a lot of body fluids.

Dr. Santibañez also discussed what CDC is doing in response to the outbreak. Several hundred CDC staff are working in West Africa. They are helping out of compassion for people in the affected countries and also for practical reasons. If we can control the epidemic at its source, it is less likely we will have new cases in the United States. CDC is teaching people in affected countries about infection control and helping to communicate information about Ebola.

He then discussed some steps Faith- and Community-Based Organizations (FBO-CBOs) can take to help in the fight against Ebola.

- Educate people to decrease fear and stigma about Ebola.
- Work towards decreasing the stigma associated with the disease. For example, in Dallas, community and religious leaders worked together to speak out against stigmatization and to promote compassion.
- Have both the knowledge of the situation and access to resources, will help decrease fear and increase people's confidence that they can deal with a public health concern such as Ebola.
- Build resilience in your community and get involved with charitable networks and volunteer organizations active in disasters. This will enable you to link the community with resources to help them meet basic needs.
- Promote healthy habits like flu shots and hand washing, and encourage people to stay home if they are feeling sick.

Faith- and community-based leaders would not be expected to provide direct care to anyone sick with Ebola, unless they also happened to be an experienced healthcare provider who was trained and

equipped as part of a local hospital or healthcare system. Instead, an important role for faith- and community-based leaders is to help educate people, address fears, and decrease stigma.

He concluded by sharing a quote from Archbishop Daniel Yinkah Sarfo who said, “Ebola is at war against humanity; the world must act now to stop Ebola.” Dr. Santibañez said that we must remember that Ebola is the adversary of all humanity, and we must work together to defeat it.

Summary of Doctor Abdul Shaikh’s Presentation

The second presenter, Dr. Abdul Shaikh, is a member of the Board of Directors for the American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP). AMHP is a national non-profit organization focused on empowering Muslim health professionals to improve the health of Americans by efforts inspired through the Islamic tradition.

Doctor Shaikh discussed the importance of getting involved in this effort. It’s important for faith-based organizations to support public health and social justice. He related the challenges with Ebola to his own experiences with public health, which are largely from a behavioral science perspective.

Several factors from behavioral science can be utilized to help communities.

- Provide education to congregations and communities about Ebola, including: what is Ebola? and how it is spread?
- Recognize that self-efficacy is an important construct. It is important to understand Ebola, but equally important to provide people with something to do about it.
- Provide social support where communities and congregations can come together.
- Look at the bigger picture when communicating about Ebola.
- Tap into the values and ideas that resonate best with your communities and congregations to see the best ways to make the information relevant (“one size doesn’t fit all”).

Dr. Shaikh concluded the presentation by sharing some examples from the American Muslim Health Professionals and International Interfaith Peace Corps to illustrate where faith based organizations can intersect for common causes of compassion and social justice.

Examples include:

- In the Islamic tradition, where fasting in the month of Ramadan is very important, but allowances for not fasting are made if you have health issues.
- The International interfaith Peace Corps made up of many interfaith groups around the country come together for common causes of compassion and social justice.

Questions and Answers:

Q. What specific recommendations are there for hospital chaplains?

Dr. Santibañez: Many different communities recognize the importance of the support that hospital chaplains provide. We would want to limit the number of people in the hospital who have contact with an Ebola patient. The chaplain would not be having direct contact with the patient. But, we would rely on the faith-based community to provide innovative solutions for how this important service can be provided without direct contact. For example, In Dallas, charitable networks provided iPads and cell phones that people could use to communicate with their religious leaders.

Q. What specific actions should houses of worship take to prepare their congregations for Ebola?

Dr. Santibañez: A very important role houses of worship can play is to help get the message out about Ebola to help decrease fears and reduce stigma. Secondly, being involved with local charitable networks is very helpful. When we got word in Dallas that people were being asked to stay home, within hours these charities were providing weeks of hot meals and toiletries to help people.

Dr. Shaikh: I would add to look at resources that are available from CDC and other trusted sources and then get those out to your congregations and communities. Get it out to your website, print it out and pass it out to your communities. Reach out to local interfaith and community based networks to see how to come together to have the greatest impact.

Q. What should our message be if there are rumors about bioterrorism and Ebola? What about Ebola in semen?

Dr. Santibañez: It's useful to go to reputable sources of information, like the CDC, to address any rumors. Right now, there's no evidence of any bioterrorist potential. There's a large Ebola outbreak in West Africa, and we know how the cases here in the United States have been connected to that outbreak. The second question, you are correct that Ebola can be found in bodily fluids like semen. Keep in mind that the number of cases is quite low in this country. The infection is not widespread, so we wouldn't expect it to be circulating out in the community. If people recover from Ebola, they are given instructions at the time of their discharge with additional information. However, there is an opportunity here to encourage people to practice safe sex to prevent other kinds of infections.

Q. Is a sore throat a symptom of Ebola?

Dr. Santibañez: A sore throat is not a major symptom of Ebola. We think of abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, muscle aches, high fever. However, someone with Ebola certainly could develop a sore throat, especially if they are vomiting. But, they would have other symptoms as well.

Q. My organization works in West Africa. Two of my staff recently passed away in Sierra Leone. We've worked closely in Sierra Leone with the different faith-based communities to give them the training. We are willing to pass along any information that our group can provide to help.

Dr. Santibañez: Thank you for the work that you are doing, and our deepest sympathies on the loss of your colleagues. It's important to work with groups that understand the culture of communities that are affected. In Dallas, some of the people who needed to be followed were from West Africa, and we were able to work with the Liberian Association to get them food and clothing that was culturally appropriate.

Dr. Shaikh: We recognize in times of crisis, different rules apply, even among the faith-based communities. We need to think about what those special rules for our faith practices might be in crisis situations.

Q. According to homeland security, airports are going to start screening at five airports. Is CDC doing multicultural announcements for the airports?

Lisa: We are working with partners to get materials in the language of affected communities. We have materials available now in different languages, and we always try work with partners to identify others that may be needed and coordinate to meet those needs as much as we can.

Dr. Santibañez: Our local partners are very useful in getting information out in specific languages. In Dallas, there were 40 different languages within a 3 miles radius of the apartment in questions. The local health department worked with partners in the community to get educational materials translated.

Q. What are the protocols we can put in place to educate clients coming from west Africa that are affected, and what precautions do we need to put in place for our staff?

Dr. Santibañez: Pulling together information and education for your staff and your clients about Ebola will be useful. Also, connect with your local and state health department to let them know you work with these communities. And, if you hear of someone with a travel history to Ebola-affected countries, and who is also experiencing symptoms of Ebola, you can help them get in touch with the local health authorities.

Q. Some people claim to have a solution to Ebola. How should they reach out to CDC?

Lisa: The first step would be to contact CDC-INFO. 800-CDC-INFO or cdcinfo@cdc.gov. They can help route information to the appropriate experts.

Q. How do we get members of Congress to talk about not doing the travel ban? The 5 airports, we've not been receiving any kinds of communications with those cities around including African immigrants in planning or communication efforts around the airports. Please remember to include us [Cameroonian community organizations] in those meetings. Also, for Dr. Shaikh: does your organization work with the African Imam association?

Dr. Shaikh: I have local contacts here in Washington, D.C. who are looped in to those national networks. The International Interfaith Peace Corps and the Imam associations are good connections. Our organization is looking at conducting a systematic effort to align religious practice with public health needs. If you would like to connect, please send your information to emergencypartners@cdc.gov and we can discuss more.

Call concludes with thanks, CDC-INFO info, and reminder that a summary document will be provided as soon as it is available.