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State's Ebola Hotline Activated at Illinois Poison Center

Chicago, IL (October 17, 2014) – Illinoisans with questions about Ebola or who are looking for general information on the virus can now contact the state's Ebola hotline.

Managed by Illinois Poison Center (IPC) staff, the hotline will not only keep the members of the public informed about symptoms, risks and other key information, but will aid hospitals statewide in treating their patients by preventing well-intentioned Illinoisans from tying up hospital phone lines or flocking to emergency departments seeking information.

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) designated the IPC as the call center's site because of its previous experience and its capacity to meet the information needs of the state's residents. Nationally accredited by the American Association of Poison Control Centers, the IPC is integrated into the state's emergency response plan, formally called the IDPH Illinois Health and Medical Care Response Plan, and can be utilized as a hotline to answer questions of a health and medical nature from the general public during certain potential crises.

"As part of our longstanding partnership with the Illinois Department of Public Health, and as a part of the state's emergency response plan, the Illinois Poison Center has both the capacity and the infrastructure to handle calls on this potential public health crisis," said Dr. Michael Wahl, MD, Medical Director for the Illinois Poison Center. "We have previously served as the site for similar hotlines, such as H1N1 and MERS. Our system is well-suited to such a situation, because it allows us to efficiently route a high volume of calls to experts trained to handle this matter."

Illinoisans with questions or concerns about Ebola may call 1-800-889-3931.

For more information on the Illinois Poison Center, please visit illinoispoisoncenter.org.

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The **Illinois Poison Center** is a nonprofit health service that provides the people of Illinois with comprehensive and trusted information and treatment advice on potentially harmful substances via a free, confidential 24-hour helpline staffed by specially trained doctors, nurses and pharmacists.