



Advancing global health since 1903

## AMERICAN SOCIETY OF TROPICAL MEDICINE AND HYGIENE

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### **UPDATED: To Stop Ebola Outbreak, Virus Must Be Contained in West Africa**

*The Society issued the following statement ahead of ASTMH's Annual Meeting in New Orleans:*

Deerfield, Ill. (October 30, 2014) – The Ebola virus has killed and affected thousands of people in West Africa, fueled anxiety worldwide, and has led to fear and irrational assessments in the face of a threatening and incurable virus. These reactions are understandable given that the virus has such a high fatality rate, no vaccine and no proven cure.

The efforts of brave healthcare professionals and humanitarians from the United States and around the world should be lauded. These heroes are serving the global good by working in West Africa to end this outbreak and prevent additional death and suffering. The Society firmly believes that policies that hinder the work of healthcare workers are ineffective and counterproductive.

The American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH) is proud to be the professional home for scientists, clinicians and program professionals who lead the fight against infectious disease – in the lab and on the ground. Amidst this rapidly evolving global public health situation, ASTMH will host its 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting in New Orleans November 2-6. The world's leading scientists on tropical medicine and global health will gather to share the latest findings on malaria, dengue, cholera, as well as Ebola and many other diseases that impact our world.

The nature of our community's work coupled with the timing of the meeting has raised concern among health and government officials in our host city of New Orleans and the state of Louisiana. The Society has been contacted by the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) and the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) regarding their plans to implement a travel advisory that affects our upcoming conference.

Each state within the U.S. has legal rights and responsibilities to set its own public health policy to meet perceived local public health needs and concerns. While the state of Louisiana's [policies](#) are outside of the scientific understanding of Ebola transmission—and acknowledged by the state health officials' own admission—we recognize that the state has determined its policy in this matter. ASTMH does not agree with the policy as outlined by the Louisiana DHH.

The ASTMH Annual Meeting serves a much larger good, bringing scientists and dedicated professionals together from around the world to further the scientific discourse and ultimately improve the health of those suffering from disease.

We deeply regret that some of our attendees are affected by Louisiana's travel advisory. ASTMH will fully refund the registration fee for anyone who cannot attend as a result of this policy.

The Society's meeting provides us with an opportunity to engage Louisiana, other U.S. states and the global community on some of the health issues we care most about – the tremendous toll of the current outbreak in West Africa, best strategies to safeguard global public health now and in the future and to raise public awareness of tropical infectious diseases.

ASTMH firmly believes the single best way to safeguard Americans and the world is to end the epidemic in West Africa with the help of our best-trained, brave men and women.

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**About the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene**

*ASTMH, founded in 1903, is a worldwide organization of scientists, clinicians and program professionals whose mission is to promote global health through the prevention and control of infectious and other diseases that disproportionately afflict the global poor.*

**About the American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene**

*Continuously published since 1921, AJTMH is the peer-reviewed journal of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, and the world's leading voice in the fields of tropical medicine and global health. AJTMH disseminates new knowledge in fundamental, translational, clinical and public health sciences focusing on improving global health.*