



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619

DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

JUDYANN BIGBY, MD
SECRETARY

JOHN AUERBACH
COMMISSIONER

February 4, 2010

Dear Colleagues,

This note is written to provide you with updated information about the transport of Haitian patients to the U.S. The information comes from senior federal officials from the Department of Health and Human Services, who spoke with state health officials yesterday on a national conference call. While the officials did indicate this was still a fluid situation, they provided information which, if accurate, would mean we are unlikely to receive patients via the federal government's initiative for some time, if at all. Here is what they relayed:

- They anticipate transferring on average only 10 patients a day to U.S. hospitals.
- The planes they are using for transport have limited range without refueling. If they fly north of Georgia, they need to refuel before proceeding, which they would prefer to avoid because of time and safety issues.
- As of 2/3/10, and for the coming days, they are concentrating their efforts on transferring patients to the Tampa, Florida and Atlanta, Georgia regions, where Federal Coordinating Centers (FCC) have been activated. These locations have the capacity to accept a fairly significant number of patients, particularly if the daily volume is low.
- Beyond the Florida and Georgia areas, they are considering only a small number of other states as possible sites for the receipt of patients. FCCs have been put on alert in Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania as well as the District of Columbia. These areas are being considered due to the size of their Haitian communities. According to the federal officials, however, they believe it unlikely that these FCCs will be activated to receive patients based upon their assessment of conditions on the ground in Haiti.

Since the earthquake devastated Haiti in January, you have come together to commit significant time and effort to respond to the needs of the Haitian community in the Commonwealth, and to prepare to receive severely injured individuals from Haiti if necessary. As a result of your ongoing efforts, we have strengthened essential public and private partnerships that will support

necessary work going forward. Thank you for your time and commitment to responding to this crisis.

We will continue to finalize our plans in Massachusetts to respond if or when we are asked to accept patients. Please continue to work with our coordinating group which includes: Mary Clark, Lauren Smith, Marilyn Chase, Kurt Schwartz, Don Boyce, Richard Chacon and Harold Cox.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Auerbach". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Auerbach, Commissioner
Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Cc: Mary E. Clark, Director
DPH Emergency Preparedness Bureau