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ANGOLA MARBURG VIRAL HEMORRHAGIC FEVER

Update – April 20, 2005

U.S. Government Provides Additional Funding to the Marburg Virus Response

On March 22, the Angolan Ministry of Health (MOH) identified an outbreak of viral hemorrhagic fever in the northern province of Uíge as Marburg virus. As of April 18, the MOH reports that 264 cases of Marburg virus have been recorded, of which, 239 have been fatal. Since the outbreak began in October 2004, most transmission has been confined to Uíge, although a smaller number of cases have been reported in six other provinces. The Marburg virus has a high mortality rate as no vaccine or cure exists, but avoiding contact with infected body fluids and blood can prevent transmission.

The MOH has partnered with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), U.N. World Health Organization (WHO), U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) to create a National Technical Commission to combat the Marburg outbreak. The commission has strengthened coordination in the areas of logistics, case finding, diagnostic testing, and community outreach to prevent the further spread of the virus. The MOH, with support from MSF, has established isolation and treatment facilities, while the Angolan military is providing logistical support to the MOH. In addition, the MOH and WHO are working with traditional community leaders to deliver culturally-appropriate health education and to identify people who have been in close contact with those affected by the Marburg virus.

On March 22, following the MOH announcement, U.S. Ambassador to Angola Cynthia G. Efirid issued a disaster declaration due to the effects of the Marburg virus. In response to the declaration, USAID/OFDA immediately provided \$50,000 to USAID/Angola for the local procurement of medical supplies. USAID/Angola donated these supplies on behalf of the American people to the MOH to help hospitals and clinics respond to the outbreak. On April 18, USAID committed \$525,000—\$350,000 from USAID/OFDA, \$100,000 from USAID's Bureau for Global Health, and \$75,000 from USAID's Bureau for Africa—to support the CDC's response to the Marburg outbreak.

At the request of the MOH, the CDC has deployed a 14-person team, including laboratory staff, epidemiologists, infection control experts, and communications specialists, to Uíge and Luanda, Angola's capital. In addition, a team of 11 staff members at CDC headquarters in Atlanta is providing support to the field team.

The U.S. military through U.S. European Command (EUCOM) has deployed a specialist in tropical and preventive medicine to Luanda to support the Angolan military medical staff. The EUCOM physician will provide education on hemorrhagic fever and infection control and will help assess the Angolan military's practices and procedures. EUCOM is also contributing a limited supply of personal protective equipment, including goggles, boots, and aprons.