

PRESS RELEASE

OCTOBER 27, 2014

TOWNSHIP OF LEBANON, HUNTERDON COUNTY

OFFICE OF MAYOR THOMAS MCKEE

The Township of Lebanon, Hunterdon County, New Jersey, has been advised that the New Jersey Department of Health is planning to use the Hagedorn State facilities as an area for an Ebola response. Hagedorn is a 600 acre, State owned site located in the Township. It is a remote site, completely controlled by the State of New Jersey.

The Township has not yet been advised as to whether the Hagedorn site will be used to quarantine persons who may have been exposed to the Ebola virus, but are symptom-free, or to house persons who have confirmed cases of Ebola.

Township officials are concerned for the safety and well-being of the Lebanon Township residents. Accordingly, I have requested, through the Office of Senator Michael Doherty, that an immediate meeting be held with representatives of the New Jersey Department of Health so that I can learn more about the situation.

I strenuously oppose any housing of confirmed Ebola cases in Lebanon Township. The Hagedorn facility is not equipped for that type of very challenging and extraordinary medical emergencies. There are hospitals throughout the United States that have been designated and which are equipped for and experienced in treating patients who have dangerous, communicable diseases.

If the plan is to house persons who have been exposed to the virus, but are currently without any symptoms, I demand to know what steps will be taken to protect the citizens of Lebanon Township from possible exposure. Specifically I am very concerned about:

1. What safeguards are available to protect residents of the Township from potential exposure to the virus. I want to hear what the New Jersey Department of Health has to say about the steps it plans to take to protect our citizens.

2. I am very concerned about the threat to our police and emergency services responders. Will these individuals be called upon to respond to fires or other emergencies at Hagedorn? Will they be asked to transport persons who are in quarantine?

3. If our police and/or emergency services responders are going to be asked to assist in either transporting, responding to emergencies or interacting with persons in quarantine, what training will they receive and when will that training be done. Will there be a need for special

equipment or protective gear? Who will issue this? Who will pay for the cost of this equipment or gear?

4. What guarantees will there be that the brave healthcare workers assigned to quarantine duty at Hagedorn are properly trained and do not inadvertently expose those in the community to the Ebola virus when they are out and about.

Lebanon Township is a responsible and caring place. However my number one priority, and the number one priority of my fellow Committee members, is for the health and safety of our schoolchildren, citizens, police and the emergency responders.

The residents of Lebanon Township demand and deserve to know that state officials are taking every reasonable step to protect Lebanon Township citizens, young and old. In addition, State officials need to communicate clearly and regularly what steps they are taking to provide this protection. When one Township is singled out to bear a greater burden, the State owes to its citizens careful assurance they are not being asked to take unreasonable risks.

I hope to hear from our State officials in the immediate future so I can then provide information to my residents about this extraordinary situation.