October 23, 2014

Honorable Vincent C. Gray
Mayor
District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 316
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Honorable Mayor Gray:

On behalf of registered nurses, other health care professionals, firefighters and EMS workers, DCNA and IAFF, Local 36 recognize that the only way to confront and prepare for the Ebola crisis is for the Mayor to mandate uniform standards and protocols that all health care institutions and emergency responders must adhere to in order to ensure the safety of patients, workers and the community.

We urge you to direct health care institutions and emergency responders to institute at least the following measures:

➢ Personal protective equipment for Ebola that meets or exceeds the standards utilized by the University of Nebraska Medical Center. This includes the use of Full body Hazmat suits with OSHA approved powered air purifying respirators with a protection factor of 50 or above, or a higher standard, as appropriate.

➢ Negative pressure isolation rooms with an anteroom for changing personal protective equipment.

➢ Continuous, interactive training with workers who are exposed to patients, including updates responsive to the changing nature of the Ebola virus.
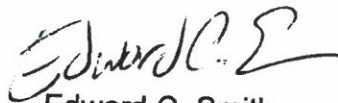
We know that mandated standardized procedures will create a safer environment for patients, workers and the community. We should not be in the position of placing our citizens, health care professionals and first responders at risk due to a health care facility's lack of preparedness. We should not put citizens in a position similar to that which occurred at the Virginia Hospital Center, as reported in The Washington Post on October 22d. There, despite claiming it was prepared for the Ebola crisis, the hospital refused to provide care for a woman suspected of having the Ebola virus.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter of utmost importance.

Sincerely,

Margaret Shanks
President
DCNA

Edward C. Smith
President
IAFF, Local 36

Edward J. Smith, Esq.
Acting Executive Director
DCNA