



## Employers Confront Ebola Concerns in Workplaces

News

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Howard Mavity was quoted on *USA Today* on October 15, 2014. The article “Employers Confront Ebola Concerns in Workplaces” focused on how businesses are grappling to manage workplace concerns about the virus.

Howard said he has received a flurry of calls from clients who have employees who have returned from personal, rather than work-related, trips to Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, the countries hardest hit by the Ebola virus.

“I’ve had over 25 different inquiries in under 24 hours,” Howard said. “The most common question is, ‘Can I ... tell them to stay home for 21 days?’ And what I’m recommending is no.”

Doing so could set the employer up for a complaint to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Howard noted. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention “is not saying it’s so dangerous you should exclude someone who’s just returned, and if the employer does that it’s likely they’re violating the law,” Howard added.

“There are legal protections for people who choose to refuse,” Howard stated. “Under OSHA anti-retaliation law, if you have a reasonable fear for safety and refuse to work, that’s protected, but if it’s frivolous it’s not. So right now it’s anyone’s guess how that would be perceived.”

Still, Howard said he believes that businesses were more concerned about earlier pandemics, such as swine flu. And many international companies have services that monitor health issues and other potential crises across the globe.

“I’d imagine people are routinely going to Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, and I don’t think it’s unreasonable, or exposing them to a risk,” Howard said. “But I would venture you would find in these affected countries, business travel is all but gone.”

To read the full article, please visit [USA Today](#).

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