Physicians and public health agencies both have important roles and responsibilities during a disease outbreak.

Physicians’ roles include:
- Caring for patients,
- Advising patients on disease transmission and means of prevention,
- Communicating with local public health departments about suspected cases of disease, and
- Determining whether someone needs quarantine or isolation.

Public health agencies’ roles include:
- Monitoring and investigating exposed and infected patients,
- Providing information on the disease, preventive measures, personal protective equipment, etc.,
- Helping to determine the duration of quarantine,
- Providing public information about isolation or quarantine, and
- Securing court orders as necessary and appropriate during isolation.

### Local Public Health Departments

**In Kansas**

- Johnson County ......................... 913-826-1303
- Leavenworth County .................... 913-250-2000
- Wyandotte County ....................... 913-573-6712

**In Missouri**

- Cass County ............................. 816-380-8432
- Clay County ............................. 816-781-1600
- Independence ........................... 816-325-7204
- Jackson County .......................... 816-404-6415
- Kansas City .............................. 816-513-6152
- Platte County ............................ 816-858-2412
- Ray County .............................. 816-776-5413

www.marc.org/emergency/mohakca.htm
**Quarantine vs. Isolation — What’s the Difference?**

**Quarantine** separates people who have been exposed to a specific illness (but aren’t yet sick and don’t have symptoms) from others.

**Why would one be quarantined?**
Some infections can be spread even before a person knows he or she is sick or has any symptoms.

**Where would one be quarantined?**
A person is usually quarantined in his or her own home.

**How long would one be quarantined?**
The individual — and often the entire family — will stay at home until the risk of developing the disease or its symptoms is over and health officials determine it is safe to end the quarantine. The length of time varies, depending on the disease and its incubation period.

**How will the public know about the need for quarantine?**
If widespread quarantine is needed, people will be informed through public health news announcements made on TV, on radio, in newspapers or using other media.

**What if one is in quarantine and becomes ill?**
A quarantined person who develops symptoms associated with the disease in question should immediately contact his or her personal physician and local public health department. Once ill, the individual will be considered to be in “isolation” instead of quarantine.

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**Isolation** separates those who are already ill or infected from those who are not.

**Why would people be placed in isolation?**
Isolating sick people helps prevent the spread or transmission of disease.

**Where would sick people be isolated?**
The location of isolation depends on how sick the person is. Isolation might take place at home, but if the illness is more serious — or if the patient is already hospitalized — isolation might take place in the hospital.

**How long would people be isolated?**
The duration of isolation will depend on the severity of the illness and how quickly the individual recovers.

**How will people know about the need for isolation?**
A physician or public health official will write orders for an individual to be isolated, either at home or in a hospital, once he or she is diagnosed with or suspected to have the disease.

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**Legal Authority**

By definition, both isolation and quarantine restrict the movement of individuals. While voluntary isolation and quarantine may be successful, involuntary restriction may be necessary in certain circumstances. To avoid delays that might put more people at risk, physicians, public health personnel, law enforcement officials and others need to be familiar with the legal authorities surrounding these issues. Both Kansas and Missouri have given local public health agencies the authority to order quarantine or isolation when it is deemed necessary to prevent the spread of disease. Contact your local public health agency for specific ordinances that may apply to your jurisdiction.