

# WHO adjusts conditions as staffers get Ebola

September 9 2014, by Maria Cheng

---



Health workers, attend to patients that contracted the Ebola virus, at a clinic in Monrovia, Liberia, Monday, Sept. 8, 2014. Border closures, flight bans and mass quarantines are creating a sense of siege in the West African countries affected by Ebola, officials at an emergency African Union meeting said Monday, as Senegal agreed to allow humanitarian aid pass through its closed borders. (AP Photo/Abbas Dulleh)

World Health Organization staff battling an Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone are working in larger quarters and no longer live with people from

other agencies, after a scientist with the U.N. group was infected with the dreaded disease last month, a spokeswoman said Tuesday.

A second WHO [health care](#) worker, a doctor, has now also been infected in Sierra Leone, the U.N. health agency announced Monday. It has not released any more information about the doctor, but Emory University Hospital in the United States has said it is preparing to receive an American infected with Ebola while working in West Africa on Tuesday.

The Ebola outbreak sweeping West Africa has killed more than 2,000 people and has taken a particularly high toll on [health care workers](#). After a Senegalese epidemiologist with WHO tested positive for the disease, the agency conducted an investigation into how he became infected.

While WHO is not releasing the results of the investigation, spokeswoman Nyka Alexander said Tuesday that staff living and working quarters in Sierra Leone have been expanded to make them less cramped and they no longer share living space with officials from other agencies. Changes were also made to working procedures, including more routine temperature checks for everyone coming to the WHO office and living quarters, Alexander said.

She said the investigation report was "pretty clear" about revealing how the Senegalese epidemiologist was infected but said the agency wouldn't be releasing details.

"It's not a new or unexpected risk," she said. Epidemiologists do not treat patients but are sometimes involved in contact tracing to follow up potential cases and liaising with safe burial teams for Ebola victims.

Alexander said a second investigation has now begun into how the latest

WHO doctor was infected and the agency has also recommended the Sierra Leone government stop accepting new patients into the Ebola clinic where the incident occurred.

Of the more than 3,500 people believed to be infected in Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Senegal, about 250 have been health care workers. The hardest-hit countries already had too few doctors and nurses before the outbreak, and that toll has only made it harder to respond to the crisis and recruit more caregivers.

Most of the people staffing treatment centers are locals, and experts say several hundred more foreign health care workers are needed. The African Union promised Monday to send at least 100 doctors, nurses and personnel to Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea for a six-month medical support mission. The mission will be funded by \$10 million from the U.S. Agency for International Development and 5 million euros (\$6.5 million) from the European Union. It was not clear when the first teams would arrive.

The United States and Britain also announced Monday that they will build new treatment centers in West Africa. The American one, in Liberia, will be exclusively for treating health care workers. Britain is also sending military engineers and medical staff to run its clinic in Sierra Leone that will include a section to provide high-quality specialized care for health workers.

© 2014 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: WHO adjusts conditions as staffers get Ebola (2014, September 9) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-09-adjusts-conditions-staffers-ebola.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is

provided for information purposes only.