

Australian hospital patient tests free of Ebola

September 11 2014, by Rod McGuirk

An Ebola false alarm at Australia's premier beachside tourist city on Thursday triggered cancelled vacation bookings, early hotel checkouts and children missing school, an official said.

A sick miner was admitted to a hospital isolation unit in Gold Coast city in the morning because he had recently returned from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Queensland state Chief Health Officer Jeannette Young said late Thursday that blood tests confirmed he did not have the disease blamed for more than 2,200 deaths throughout West Africa from the worst Ebola outbreak in history.

The 27-year-old miner has not been publicly named. Young did not disclose his illness, but his treating specialist doctor said his condition was not serious.

State authorities had earlier said the patient was unlikely to have the contagious disease and had urged against public panic.

Phone calls and social media contacts with the Health Department "suggest people were cancelling holidays to Queensland, checking out of their Gold Coast accommodation early, and even pulling their children out of school," Young said in a statement.

There have been no confirmed Ebola cases in Australia from the recent African outbreak.

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