

## Expert: Quarantine causes unintended consequences

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Patient Nina Pham is hugged by Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, outside of National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Md., Friday, Oct. 24, 2014. Pham, the first nurse diagnosed with Ebola after treating an infected man at a Dallas hospital is free of the virus. The 26-year-old Pham arrived last week at the NIH Clinical Center. She had been flown there from Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas. (AP

Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)

Mandatory 21-day quarantines on health care workers returning from Ebola-ravaged West Africa, like those put in place by three states, can have the unintended consequence of discouraging them from volunteering, a top federal health official said Sunday.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said that as a physician and scientist, he would have recommended against a quarantine.

"The best way to protect us is to stop the epidemic in Africa, and we need those [health care workers](#) so we do not want to put them in a position where it makes it very, very uncomfortable for them to even volunteer to go." he said.

He said active and direct monitoring can accomplish the same thing as a quarantine because people infected with Ebola do not become contagious until they start showing symptoms. Ebola is transmitted through direct contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person.

New York, New Jersey and Illinois imposed mandatory quarantines after Dr. Craig Spencer, a Doctors Without Borders physician who treated patients in Guinea, was diagnosed with Ebola last Thursday. The doctor, who is now in isolation at New York's Bellevue Hospital, had been on the subway, went bowling, jogged in a park and dined at a restaurant before showing symptoms.

Florida Gov. Rick Scott ordered twice daily monitoring for anyone returning from paces the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention designates as affected by Ebola. Scott signed the order

Saturday giving the Florida Health Department authority to monitor individuals for 21 days, the incubation period for Ebola.

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie said he concluded the quarantine was necessary to protect public health in his state and that he thinks the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention "eventually will come around to our point of view on this."



This Feb. 28, 2014, file photo shows Samantha Power, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., speaking during a news conference after a private U.N. Security Council meeting. Power is going to visit all three of the West African countries hit hardest by the Ebola outbreak. A statement released late Saturday, Oct. 25, 2014, by the U.S. mission to the U.N. says Samantha Power will visit Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea "to draw attention to the need for increased support for the international response." (AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews, File)

Christie said Fauci was counting on "a voluntary system with folks who may or may not comply."

The governor pointed to an NBC News crew that had returned from West Africa and was supposed to self-quarantine because its cameraman was hospitalized with Ebola. "Two days later they were out picking up takeout food in Princeton and walking around the streets of Princeton," he said. The cameraman has recovered and has been released from the hospital.

In New Jersey, a nurse who worked had been working with Doctors Without Borders with Ebola patients in Sierra Leone became the first person to be quarantined under the new regulations when she arrived at Newark Liberty International Airport on Friday.

The nurse, Kaci Hickox, criticized the way her case has been handled, raising concerns from humanitarian and human rights groups over unclear policies for the newly launched quarantine program.

Hickox wrote a first-person account for the Dallas Morning News, which was posted on the paper's website Saturday. Her preliminary tests for Ebola came back negative.

"This is not a situation I would wish on anyone, and I am scared for those who will follow me," Hickox wrote of her quarantine. "I am scared about how health care workers will be treated at airports when they declare that they have been fighting Ebola in West Africa. I am scared that, like me, they will arrive and see a frenzy of disorganization, fear and, most frightening, quarantine. ... The U.S. must treat returning health care workers with dignity and humanity."

The hazy details of how such quarantines will be handled are drawing sharp criticism as infectious disease experts say enforcement logistics are up in the air.

Fauci said Spencer did exactly what he should have done by putting himself in isolation as soon as he developed a fever. "No one came into contact with his body fluids," Fauci said. "The risk is essentially zero, vanishingly small."

Fauci said the health care workers returning from treating Ebola patients are responsible and know that if they have symptoms there's the possibility of transmitting the disease. "They don't want to get anyone else infected," he said.

As for the unintended consequences, he said, "If we don't have our people volunteering to go over there, then you're going to have other countries that are not going to do it and then the epidemic will continue to roar," he said.

Samantha Power, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations who is on a trip to West Africa to highlight the need for increased international support to combat Ebola, spoke of a need to ensure that returning U.S. [health care](#) workers "are treated like conquering heroes and not stigmatized for the tremendous work that they have done."

Fauci appeared on "Fox News Sunday," ABC's "This Week" and NBC's "Meet the Press." Christie was interviewed on Fox and Power spoke to NBC.

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