

Crew arrives to clean quarantined Texas apartment (Update)

October 3 2014, by David Warren



This 2011 photo provided by Wilmot Chayee shows Thomas Eric Duncan, right, with friend Wilmot Chayee at a wedding in Ghana. Duncan, who became the first patient diagnosed in the U.S with Ebola, has been kept in isolation at a hospital since Sunday, Sept. 28, 2014. He was listed in serious but stable condition. (AP Photo/Wilmot Chayee)

A hazardous-materials crew arrived Friday at a Texas apartment where the U.S. Ebola patient stayed to collect bed sheets and towels used by the

infected man before he was hospitalized.

The family living in the apartment has been confined to their home under armed guard while public-health officials monitor them—part of an intense effort to contain the deadly disease before it can get a foothold in the United States.

Louise Troh, who shares the apartment with her 13-year-old son and two nephews, said she is tired of being quarantined and wants authorities to decontaminate her home.

"Who wants to be locked up?" she said Thursday. Private security guards and sheriff's deputies blocked the entrance to the 300-unit apartment complex.

Elsewhere, NBC News reported that an American freelance cameraman working for the network in Liberia has tested positive for the virus and will be flown back to the United States, along with the rest of the news crew.

A cleanup crew hired by the county and state paid an initial visit to the apartment Thursday evening to assess the job. They returned around midday Friday to complete the work, which was expected to take about three hours.

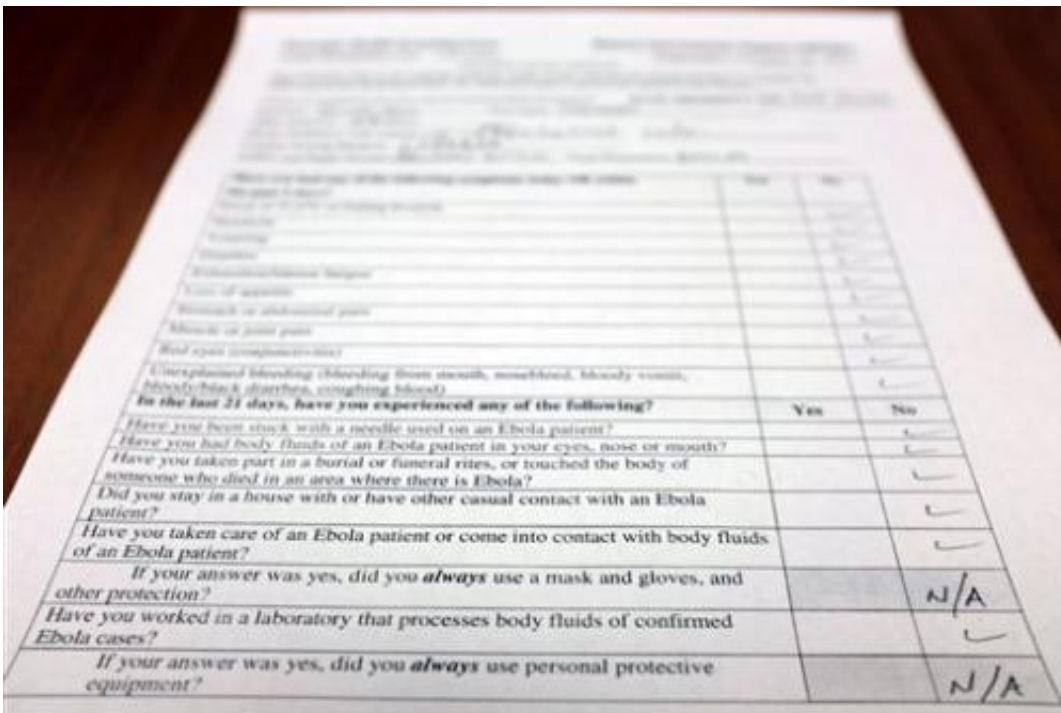
The family living there will be allowed to remain in the apartment during the cleaning. Earlier, officials had said they would have to be moved.

Items from both the apartment and from the hospital where Thomas Duncan is being treated, will be placed in secure containers and removed for disposal.

The first Ebola diagnosis in the nation has raised concerns about whether

the disease that has killed 3,300 people in West Africa could spread in the U.S. Federal health officials say they are confident they can keep it in check.

The confinement order, which also bans visitors, was imposed after the family failed to comply with a request to stay home, according to Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins.



This Oct. 2, 2014 photo shows a copy of a passenger health screening form filled out by Ebola patient Thomas Eric Duncan, which was obtained by the Associated Press from the Liberia Airport Authority. Liberia plans to prosecute Duncan, who brought Ebola into the U.S., alleging that he lied on a health questionnaire about not having any contact with an infected person, authorities said Thursday, Oct. 2, 2014. (AP Photo/Kiichiro Sato)

Meanwhile, Texas health officials expanded their efforts to contain the

virus, reaching out to as many as 100 people who may have had direct contact with Duncan or someone close to him.

None has shown symptoms, but they have been told to notify medical workers if they begin to feel ill, said Erikka Neroes, a spokeswoman for the Dallas County Health and Human Services agency.

The at-risk group includes 12 to 18 people who had direct contact with the infected man, including an ambulance crew and a handful of schoolchildren. The others came into contact with that core group, she said.

"This is a big spider web" of people, Neroes said.

The virus that causes Ebola is not airborne and can only be spread through direct contact with the bodily fluids—blood, sweat, vomit, feces, urine, saliva or semen—of an infected person who is showing symptoms. Those fluids must also have an entry point.

For example, people might get infected by handling soiled clothing or bed sheets and then touching their mouth, or if they are not wearing gloves while doing those tasks and have a cut on their hand.

Duncan's neighbors in the Liberian capital believe he became infected when he helped a sick pregnant neighbor a few weeks ago. It was not clear if he had learned of the woman's diagnosis before traveling.

Nonetheless, Liberian authorities announced plans to prosecute Duncan when he returns, accusing him of lying about not having any contact with an infected person.



A Red Cross representative arrives at The Ivy Apartments complex, Thursday, Oct. 2, 2014, in Dallas. The Red Cross and North Texas Food Bank delivered food items and supplies to a unit at the complex where a family who had contact with a man diagnosed with the Ebola virus reside. Dallas officials have asked the family to remain in their home. (AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez)

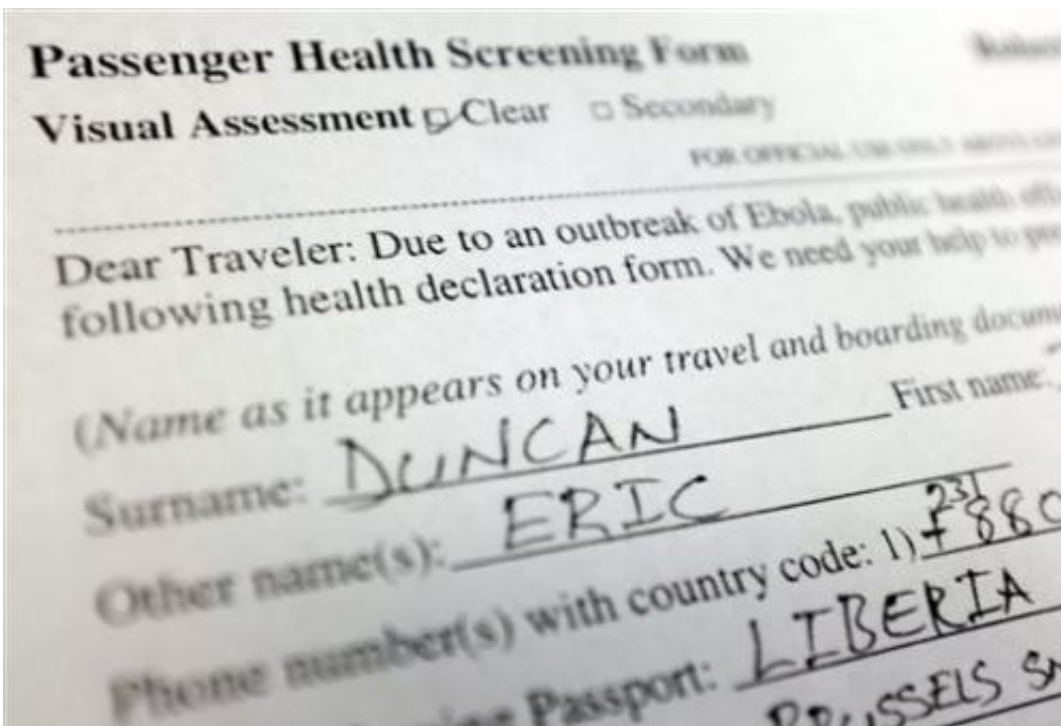
Duncan filled out a form Sept. 19 about his health and activities before leaving for Dallas. Among other questions, the form asked whether Duncan had cared for an Ebola patient or touched the body of anyone who had died in an area affected by Ebola. He answered no to all the questions.

CDC Director Tom Frieden dismissed suggestions that people traveling

from West Africa should not be allowed into the U.S.

"The fact is that if we tried to seal the border, it would not work because people are allowed to travel," he said Friday on ABC's "Good Morning America." Blocking travel, he said, "would backfire because it would make it harder to stop the outbreak."

Duncan arrived in Dallas on Sept. 20 and fell ill a few days later. An emergency room sent Duncan home last week, even though he told a nurse he had been in West Africa.



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In a statement issued late Thursday, Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital said it followed communicable disease protocols by asking Duncan if he had come into contact with anyone who was ill. He replied that he had not.

A flaw in the electronic health records systems led to separate physician and nursing workflows, meaning the travel history documented by nurses was not passed onto physicians, hospital spokesman Wendell Watson said. He said the system has been corrected.



A Red Cross representative leaves gatorade and other supplies on the front stop of a unit at The Ivy Apartments complex, Thursday, Oct. 2, 2014, in Dallas. Dallas County officials have ordered family members who had contact with the patient diagnosed with the Ebola virus to stay inside their home. (AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez)

Duncan's symptoms included a 100.1 F temperature, abdominal pain, a headache and decreased urination, the hospital said. He said he had no nausea, vomiting or diarrhea. Based on that, the hospital decided to release him.

He returned two days later and has been kept in isolation since Sunday. Duncan was listed Thursday in serious but stable condition.



Representatives of the North Texas Food Bank deliver food items to a unit at The Ivy Apartments Complex, Thursday, Oct. 2, 2014, in Dallas. Dallas County officials have ordered family members who had contact with the patient diagnosed with the Ebola virus to stay inside their home. (AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez)



Representatives of the North Texas Food Bank deliver food items to a unit at The Ivy Apartments Complex, Thursday, Oct. 2, 2014, in Dallas. Dallas County officials have ordered family members who had contact with the patient diagnosed with the Ebola virus to stay inside their home. (AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez)



A young man retrieves food supplies and personal materials left by the North Texas Food Bank and the Red Cross on the front stoop of an apartment at The Ivy Apartments complex, Thursday, Oct. 2, 2014, in Dallas. Dallas County officials have ordered family members who had contact with the patient diagnosed with the Ebola virus to stay inside their home. (AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez)



This 2011 photo provided by Wilmot Chayee shows Thomas Eric Duncan, right, with friend Wilmot Chayee at a wedding in Ghana. Duncan, who became the first patient diagnosed in the U.S with Ebola, has been kept in isolation at a hospital since Sunday, Sept. 28, 2014. He was listed in serious but stable condition. (AP Photo/Wilmot Chayee)



A hazardous materials cleaning company truck sits parked outside The Ivy Apartments, Thursday, Oct. 2, 2014, in Dallas. Dallas city officials asked a family who resides at the complex who had contact with a man diagnosed with the Ebola virus to remain in their home. (AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez)



Red Cross representatives depart The Ivy Apartments after dropping off supplies to residents in one of the units at the complex, Thursday, Oct. 2, 2014, in Dallas. Dallas city officials asked a family who resides at the complex who had contact with a man diagnosed with the Ebola virus to remain in their home. (AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez)

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