

## US lawmaker: New case raises questions on Ebola

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The new case of Ebola diagnosed in New York City has raised "even more questions about procedures in treating patients and risks to Americans," a Republican committee chairman said Friday.

Rep. Darrell Issa, a Republican, spoke as he convened a hearing of his House Oversight and Government Reform Committee on the Ebola problem. It came a day after news broke of the first case in New York, which involves a doctor who returned recently from treating patients in Guinea. It was the fourth case diagnosed in the U.S.

Republicans in particular have questioned the Obama administration's response to Ebola, and the hearing, taking place less than two weeks before congressional elections, was likely to feature more criticism.

Republicans have called for a travel ban and quarantines of travelers arriving here from the West African countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, where the epidemic has killed thousands. The Obama administration has resisted such steps even while increasing screening of arriving travelers arriving and ensuring that they are monitored for 21 days, the incubation period for the deadly disease.

"I think we all know that the system is not yet refined to where we could say it's working properly," Issa said. "It would be a major mistake to underestimate what Ebola could do to populations around the world and any further fumbles, bumbles, missteps ... can no longer be tolerated."



But the committee's top Democrat, Elijah Cummings said that the swift and comprehensive response to the case in New York shows that the U.S. health community has made strides since the initial misdiagnosis of a patient in Texas, who later died. Two nurses who cared for that patient also got infected, though both now seem to be doing well.

"It appears that health care authorities have come a long way in preparing for Ebola since Thomas Duncan first walked into a Texas hospital last month," Cummings said.

A top Health and Human Services official assured lawmakers that the likelihood of a significant outbreak of Ebola in the U.S. is remote, though she said government agencies are preparing for any contingency.

"Ebola is a dangerous disease, but there is hardly a reason for panic," Dr. Nicole Lurie, assistant HHS secretary for preparedness and response, said in prepared testimony. "There is an epidemic of fear, but not of Ebola, in the United States."

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