

Nurse becomes 11th person tested for Ebola in Australia

October 10 2014

Eleven people in Australia have been tested for Ebola in recent weeks, officials revealed Friday, as a nurse became the latest to return negative blood samples for the deadly virus.

There were fears that the disease may have breached the country's borders when a Red Cross nurse who worked with patients of the virus in Sierra Leone reported a low-level fever on Thursday after returning to Australia.

But blood tests on Sue-Ellen Kovack came back negative, although she is still only 10 days into the 21-day incubation period during which infection can happen.

"That's an enormous relief for her and for everyone," said Queensland state chief health officer Jeannette Young.

"And it absolutely confirms that there was no risk to anyone at any stage when she returned back to Cairns. The plan now is that we will keep a very close eye on her because she still is a bit unwell."

National Health Minister Peter Dutton revealed that Kovack was one of 11 people who had undergone testing for Ebola.

"Already we've had 11 cases that have presented across the country that have all been negative," he told reporters.

"We have put in place plans in major tertiary hospitals around the country that if we do have a positive case, we will be able to deal with that case."

He added that Australia's chief medical officer, head of the defence force and immigration department officials were all advising the government on how to respond to the growing Ebola crisis around the world, with screening now in place at airports.

"We've also got additional information and advice being provided on planes as people are coming into the country and that provides a world-class response and probably ahead of some of the other developed nations at the moment," he said.

The world's largest outbreak of the disease has killed 3,865 people out of 8,033 infected so far this year, mainly in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, according to the World Health Organisation's latest count.

The spillover of the virus—with the first death in the United States and the first case of infection in Spain—has raised fears of contagion in the West.

On Thursday, an official from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned that strong measures must be taken to prevent the disease from becoming the world's next AIDS epidemic.

© 2014 AFP

Citation: Nurse becomes 11th person tested for Ebola in Australia (2014, October 10) retrieved 8 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-10-nurse-11th-person-ebola-australia.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.