

Texas health worker with Ebola wore full protective gear

October 12 2014, by Kerry Sheridan

A Texas health care worker who treated a Liberian man who died of Ebola was wearing full protective gear but was infected with the dangerous virus anyway, health officials said Sunday.

The caregiver, whose gender and identity were not revealed by Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas, tested positive for Ebola on Saturday in a preliminary test and is currently in the hospital, in isolation and in stable condition.

A confirmation of the case—which would be the first contracted on US soil—by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is expected later in the day.

A close contact of the [health care](#) worker—who CNN said was a female nurse, citing an unnamed official—has also been placed in isolation, officials said at a press conference.

"This is not news that should bring about panic," said Dallas county judge Clay Jenkins.

"We expected that something—that it was possible that a second person could contract the virus."

The worker's family has requested total privacy, he added.

But Dan Varga, the chief clinical officer for Texas Health Resources,

said officials were "very concerned" that the worker had apparently contracted the virus despite following safety protocol.

"This individual was following full CDC precautions," he said, noting that the gear would have included a mask, gown, and gloves.

Varga said the health care worker came in contact with Thomas Eric Duncan, who died of Ebola on Wednesday, the second time he came to the hospital.

Duncan was the first case of Ebola diagnosed in the United States. He arrived from Liberia on September 20, and began feeling sick about four days later.

He was initially sent home from a Dallas hospital on September 25 when he sought treatment for a fever and abdominal pain, even though he also told staff of his recent travel to Africa.

He returned by ambulance on September 28 to the same hospital.

Duncan was estimated to have come in contact with about 100 people, and officials narrowed that pool down to 48 in the days after his infection was diagnosed.

The health care worker was not in the [high risk group](#) of people, Varga said, but had been asked to check his or her temperature twice daily and report back if any signs of fever, according to a protocol approved by the CDC.

"This health care worker had been under the self-care monitoring regimen recommended by the CDC," said Varga.

The person is the second case of Ebola diagnosed in the United States, as

an epidemic spreads in West Africa that has killed more than 4,000 people since the beginning of this year.

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