

# Dallas reaches end of Ebola monitoring period

November 7 2014, by Nomaan Merchant

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Dr. Stacey Good stands next to a monitor before a demonstration on their training for working with possible Ebola patients for media members Thursday, Nov. 6, 2014, at Madigan Army Medical Center on Joint Base Lewis McChord, near Tacoma, Wash. Madigan providers and nurses have been training to perform clinical skills, including inserting IVs, obtaining blood samples for testing and conducting ultrasounds while dressed in powered air purifying respirators, impermeable suits and multiple layers of gloves. The clinically-focused exercises use realistic patient simulators that speak through microphones and can express simulated bodily fluids. (AP Photo/Elaine Thompson)

Dallas calmly marked the end of its Ebola crisis on Friday when the last of the 177 people who were being monitored for symptoms of the deadly virus were to be cleared at midnight.

Thirty-eight days after Thomas Eric Duncan was diagnosed with Ebola in a local hospital, officials expressed relief and resolve that they were prepared if anything similar—with its resulting panic, fear and constant media attention—ever happened again.

"It's a time to reflect on the sacrifices of our hometown health care heroes and the city, county, and school district employees that worked so hard, along with our state and federal partners, to keep us safe during the Ebola crisis," Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins said in a statement, calling it an early Thanksgiving for the city.

Monitoring for the last person who came in contact with Duncan or the two nurses who contracted the virus will end at midnight Friday. About 50 people who returned to Texas from West African countries where the virus has killed thousands will remain under monitoring.

Duncan was diagnosed with Ebola on Sept. 30, sending officials scrambling and residents fearing the worst. He died on Oct. 8 at Texas Presbyterian Hospital. Duncan's fiancée, Louise Troh, and three others were confined to their apartment where Duncan had been staying, before they were moved to private housing.

People panicked over the possible spread of the virus. Jenkins was criticized for entering the apartment to meet with Troh, despite public health experts saying it was safe. Some people refused to shake hands with strangers, and others kept children home from schools where Troh's children attended.



In this Oct. 28, 2014, file photo, Amber Vinson, 29, the Dallas nurse who was being treated for Ebola, speaks at a news conference after being discharged from Emory University Hospital in Atlanta. Dallas calmly marked the end of its Ebola crisis on Friday, Nov. 7, 2014, when the last of the 177 people who were being monitored for symptoms of the deadly virus were to be cleared at midnight. (AP Photo/David Goldman, File)

In the end, no one in the neighborhood was infected. The two people who contracted Ebola were nurses who treated Duncan; Nina Pham and Amber Vinson both have recovered.

Government officials and the hospital have acknowledged missteps in their handling of the crisis, from letting Duncan leave the emergency room after his first visit with Ebola-related symptoms to allowing Vinson fly commercial to Cleveland and back while she was self-monitoring. Vinson has also said in interviews that she didn't feel prepared to wear the protective equipment necessary to treat Duncan.

The hospital has mounted a major public-relations campaign to apologize for its mistakes. Officials are also preparing an analysis of how it handled the Duncan case, to likely be published next year.



This Sept. 30, 2014 file photo shows Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas where Thomas Eric Duncan, the first Ebola patient diagnosed in the U.S., received care. Dallas calmly marked the end of its Ebola crisis on Friday, Nov. 7, 2014, when the last of the 177 people who were being monitored for symptoms of the deadly virus were to be cleared at midnight. (AP Photo/LM Otero, File)

And while much of the city can breathe a sigh of relief, those closest to Duncan say they're still angry about his medical treatment and how some have blamed him for bringing Ebola to the United States. With her old apartment torn apart by hazardous materials crews, Troh has had trouble finding a new place to live, as landlords fearful of the virus have refused to rent to her.

Asked about Friday's milestone, Troh's thoughts were brief.

"Thank God," she said.

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