

Ebola watch period nears end in Texas

November 6 2014

Texas is almost done watching for Ebola in people who had contact with either a Liberian patient or two nurses who were infected while caring for him, officials said Thursday.

The final person to be cleared on Friday is a hospital worker who handled medical waste on October 17, said Texas Department of State Health Services commissioner David Lakey.

The rest of the 176 being monitored—none of whom developed Ebola—included health care workers, household contacts and community members.

"We're happy to reach this milestone, but our guard stays up," Lakey said in a statement.

"We reached this point through teamwork and meticulous monitoring, and we'll continue to be vigilant to protect Texas from Ebola."

The virus's incubation period is 21 days, and after that health authorities say a person's risk of developing illness is over. Most people get sick within eight to 10 days of exposure.

Ebola is transmitted through close contact with the bodily fluids of an infection person, and has killed 4,818 people, most of them in West Africa, since the beginning of this year, according to the World Health Organization.

On September 30, the United States diagnosed its first case of Ebola. The patient was a Liberian man, Thomas Eric Duncan, who had recently traveled to Texas from his native Liberia.

Duncan died on October 8, and two nurses who treated him in the [intensive care unit](#) of Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital were also infected. They have since recovered.

No additional cases of the disease have been diagnosed in Texas.

There is currently one person being treated for Ebola in the United States, Craig Spencer, a doctor in New York who was infected last month while working in Guinea.

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