Liberia records first Ebola death since July

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A teenage boy has died of Ebola in Liberia, a health official said Tuesday, the first fatality since July in one of the three West African countries hit hardest by the worst ever outbreak of the disease.

The 15-year-old boy died Monday night, said Dr. Francis Kateh, chief medical officer and acting head of Liberia's Ebola Case Management System. The boy, who lived in Liberia's eastern Paynesville district, was the first Ebola patient in the country since it was declared Ebola-free for a second time in September.

The boy's father and brother also have tested positive for Ebola and have been taken to an Ebola treatment center along with his mother and two other siblings. Health officials have identified nearly 160 people who might be at risk of being infected with the disease, including eight health-care workers "who are at high risk because they came in direct contact with the boy," said Sorbor George, a spokesman for the country's health ministry.

Liberia on Monday said it had sought help from two experts from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to determine the cause of the latest cases.

More than 11,300 deaths have been recorded for the entire outbreak, which was first confirmed in March 2014 and has been concentrated in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, according to the World Health Organization. Liberia has recorded more than 4,800 deaths and more than 10,600 cases.

Liberia was first declared Ebola-free on May 9, but new cases emerged in June resulting in two deaths, including one in mid-July. WHO declared the country Ebola-free again on Sept. 3.

The new cases in Liberia were announced just days after Guinea, the country where the epidemic started, said it had no more Ebola patients and was beginning a 42-day countdown toward being declared free of Ebola transmission. Guinea had been the last country with any cases, as Sierra Leone was declared Ebola-free on Nov. 7.

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