

US investigating second suspected case of Chinese virus

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Authorities in Texas are investigating a second suspected case on US soil of a new and deadly Chinese virus, officials said Thursday.

Brazos County, northwest of Houston, "is investigating a suspected case of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)," officials wrote in a statement on Facebook.

"The patient traveled from Wuhan, China, where the coronavirus originated," the statement added.

"Health care providers were aware of public health guidance on novel coronavirus and quickly recognized that the patient met the criteria for coronavirus testing and is being kept isolated at home, while the precautionary testing is done."

A blood sample from the patient has to be tested by technicians at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) before the case is confirmed.

If the case is confirmed, the patient would be the second person to be infected with the pathogen on US soil after a man in his 30s near Seattle reported himself to authorities on January 19.

He is said to be recovering well and health officials have said he will be released soon.

The new respiratory virus has claimed 18 lives since emerging from a seafood and animal market in Wuhan, infected hundreds of other people nationwide and has been detected as far away as the United States.

It has caused alarm because of its similarity to SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), which killed nearly 650 people across mainland China and Hong Kong in 2002-2003.

But the outbreak does not yet constitute a global emergency, the World Health Organization said Thursday.

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