

# CDC to Issue New Ebola Protection Protocol for Hospitals

U.S. health officials will issue stricter Ebola guidelines to protect the nation's medical workers after two caregivers were infected in **Dallas** while treating a patient who later died from the disease.

The recommendations, which may be released as early as today, follow sharp criticism by some in Congress of existing national safety protocols. They increase attention to covering every bit of skin, safely donning and removing protective wear, and properly disposing of infected medical waste.

“The original recommendations that we put out in August provided a lot of flexibility,” said Abbigail Tumpey, an associate director for communications science at the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the agency that will release the new guidelines.

Hospitals “in the past wanted to adapt to what they have locally,” Tumpey said in an interview at CDC headquarters. “What we found in Dallas is that some of that adaptation could lead to potential confusion. These new recommendations are going to be much more specific.”

The new guidelines are being prepared for release as President **Barack Obama** today named former White House official **Ron Klain** to coordinate the U.S. response to Ebola amid rising public concern about his administration's response. Klain, 53, a former chief of staff to Vice President **Joe Biden**, received the assignment a day after the CDC was sharply criticized at a congressional hearing over its handling of the first three Ebola cases to emerge in the U.S.

## ‘Waning’ Trust

Representative **Tim Murphy**, a Pennsylvania Republican, said at the hearing that trust in the administration is “waning as the American public loses confidence each day with

demonstrated failures of the current strategy.”

Obama, though, said the appointment wasn't made because CDC officials “haven't been doing an outstanding job really working hard on this issue, but they also are responsible for a whole bunch of other stuff.”

Pedro Greer, a Miami doctor who won the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009 for treating the poor and teaches at **Florida**

**International University's** medical school, said Klain's lack of background in public health isn't necessarily a deficit for the job of a coordinator.

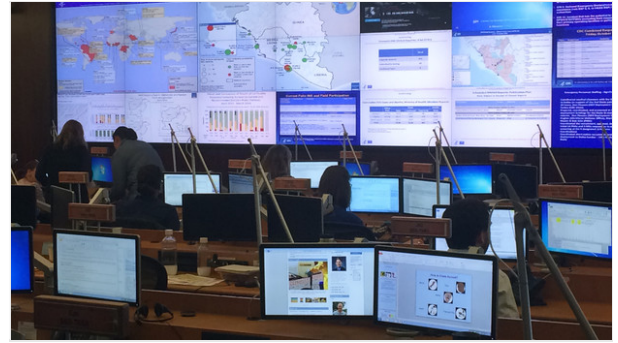
“You have all the scientists and experts at the CDC but what you need is a manager,” Greer said. “With all due respect, we scientists are not the best managers.”

## Nurses' Complaints

Concerns about prevention protocols arose after National Nurses United, a labor union, said **Texas** Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas supplied safety suits with exposed necks, and sent Ebola patient Thomas Eric Duncan's lab specimens through the system without being specially sealed. The group also said the hospital left Duncan for hours in an area with other patients.

Criticism of the CDC grew further after one of the nurses went to the hospital this week with a fever the day after taking an airline flight, and was found to be infected. The first nurse infected, Nina Pham, is in fair condition and “resting comfortably” in a **National Institutes of Health** facility in **Maryland**, after being transferred there from Dallas, NIH director **Anthony Fauci** said today.

Amber Vinson, the second health-care worker infected in Dallas, has been moved to Emory University Hospital in Atlanta, which has a specialized isolation unit.



Photographer: John Lauerman/Bloomberg

*Employees work inside the CDC's emergency operations center responding to Ebola in...*  
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“Current policies and protocols for surveillance, containment and response were not sufficient,” Murphy said yesterday at a congressional hearing. “Why weren’t protocols to protect health care and hospital workers rapidly communicated?”

## Specific Recommendations

The newest guidelines will contain specific recommendations, such as urging workers to cover all of their skin and use alcohol-based hand sanitizer on protective gloves. They also recommend a dressing room be set up outside medical-care areas, and that hospitals implement a “buddy system,” according to Tumpey.

The buddy system, where workers watch each other put on and take off protective equipment, has been used widely in Ebola outbreaks in **Africa** and is the standard for Doctors Without Borders, a global humanitarian group.

“It’s not necessarily something that has been implemented in the U.S. health care system,” Tumpey said. “We’ve suggested it in the past, but this is the first time we’ve said you have to have a buddy. There’s no wiggle room on this.”

## Hospital Inquiry

Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas, the facility where the nurses were infected, is investigating how they contracted the virus, said Daniel Varga, chief clinical officer for Texas Health Resources, which runs the hospital.

The CDC also is readying new guidelines for health-care workers performing medical procedures, such as dialysis and delivery of babies, on Ebola patients, Tumpey said.

Duncan, who died Oct. 8, received dialysis and respiratory intubation, two areas where a breach may have occurred and led to the caregivers’ infections, CDC Director **Thomas Frieden** said on Oct. 13. The new guidelines were developed after extensive interviews with health-care workers that had experience in caring for Ebola patients, according to Tumpey.

CDC officials also met with the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, the **Occupational Safety and Health Administration**, and the U.S. Department of Transportation, which oversees disposal of medical waste, to write the new protocol, she said.

In addition, the guidelines have been reviewed by groups including the American Hospital Association, and hospitals in **Nebraska**, Atlanta, and Bethesda, Maryland that are currently caring for Ebola patients, she said.

### **‘Practice, Practice’**

As important a factor as the release of the new guidelines is the idea that health-care workers practice them until they’re highly skilled, said Tom Skinner, a CDC spokesman.

“The workers have to practice, practice, practice and practice some more,” he said.

While the number of cases in the U.S. remains low, federal health officials have been bracing for more, and public anxiety has been rising as the CDC tries to track anyone who came in contact with the initial patient or the health workers.

Three schools in Belton, Texas, were closed yesterday and today after officials learned that two students were on a Frontier Airlines flight that carried Vinson, the second nurse to be infected.

In Akron, **Ohio**, officials closed a 470-student school until Oct. 20 after learning that a parent of one of the students had been in contact with Vinson when she visited the area, according to a letter to parents.

### **Ohio Effort**

Health officials yesterday widened the search for people possibly exposed to Vinson on the Frontier jet she took from Dallas to Ohio last week. Authorities want to contact anyone who was on Cleveland-bound Frontier Flight 1142 from Dallas-Fort Worth on

Oct. 10, the CDC. The agency previously said it was trying to locate 132 people on the Texas-bound return flight, Frontier 1143.

Another health worker from the Dallas hospital voluntarily entered isolation on a cruise ship, the U.S. State Department said today. While the worker didn't have direct contact with the deceased Ebola patient and is in good health, the person, who hasn't been publicly identified, may have had contact with specimens collected from the patient, the department said.

The government is working with the cruise line to safely bring the hospital employee and a traveling partner back to the U.S. "out of an abundance of caution."

After the administration acknowledged lapses in handling the first U.S. cases, Obama said yesterday he's mobilizing the federal government to contain any spread of the virus within the country's borders.

## **Battle at Source**

He said the key to stemming the outbreak is battling it in West Africa. More than 4,500 people have died from Ebola this year, mostly in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Obama authorized the Defense Department to mobilize military reserve troops who may have special skills to assist operations countering Ebola in West Africa. The Pentagon has said it's prepared to send as many as 4,000 personnel there.

Obama said he continues to oppose banning entry to the U.S. by people from the affected countries. While saying he has no "philosophical objection necessarily to a travel ban," the president cited specialists in disease control as recommending against it because it may lead to a worse outcome.

At least three Democrats have joined Republicans in calling for a travel ban.

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