

Beat: Miscellaneous

Canadian man at Toronto-area hospital tests negative for Ebola

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USPA News - A man who was quarantined at a Toronto-area hospital after falling ill with Ebola-like symptoms upon his return from West Africa has tested negative for the deadly virus, Canadian officials said Sunday, adding that the patient is now "doing well." The man, whose identity was not released, recently returned to Canada from Nigeria after which he developed symptoms such as fever, headache, malaise and other flu-like symptoms.

He went to the emergency room at Brampton Civic Hospital in Brampton, which is just outside Toronto, on Friday and was put in isolation. "I can now confirm a recent case that underwent testing at the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg was found to test negative for Ebola virus disease," Ontario Health Minister Eric Hoskins said. "Health professionals responded to the alert appropriately, by identifying an individual who potentially may have been affected, taking enhanced infection-prevention precautions, and testing. Our system worked as it should." Hoskins said the patient is "doing well," but did not disclose other details about the man's illness. "We are glad to hear that the patient is doing well, and wish him a full and speedy recovery. I would like to thank all of the health care workers and public health officials involved in the case for their tireless work," he added. The provincial health minister said health care providers have been advised to be on heightened alert for Ebola cases, particularly in people who have recently traveled to West Africa. "Ontarians should know that we are fully prepared should any cases appear in the province. This situation was the result of all our protocols working effectively," he added. The Ebola outbreak in West Africa, which started in Guinea in March and has since spread to Liberia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria, has so far infected 1,779 people, including 961 people who have died of the illness. The current outbreak features the Zaire strain of the Ebola virus, which is considered the most aggressive and deadly strain, having killed up to 9 out of 10 infected in previous outbreaks. Ebola is a highly infectious disease and kills its victims in a very short time. The ongoing outbreak is the worst ever of its kind. Signs and symptoms include high grade fever, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, headache, measles-like rash, red eyes, and in some cases bleeding from body openings. The virus, for which there is no cure or vaccine, can spread through direct contact with body fluids such as saliva, blood, stool, vomit, urine, and sweat but also through soiled linen used by an infected person. It can also spread by using skin piercing instruments previously used by an infected person or by touching the body of a person who died of Ebola. It is not airborne. The first outbreak of Ebola in 1976 in Zaire - which is now the Democratic Republic of Congo - had been the deadliest until the current outbreak, killing at least 280 people and sickening 38 others, putting the fatality rate at 88 percent. The Ebola outbreak in Uganda in 2000 had long been the largest ever recorded, killing 224 people and sickening at least 201 others.

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