

# Missionary doctor from Texas contracts lethal Ebola virus

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WASHINGTON (RNS)—An Ebola outbreak that has killed more than 670 people in Africa now is taking a toll on doctors and health care workers battling the deadly disease, including a physician from Fort Worth.

 Kent Brantly of Samaritan's Purse, right, gives orders for medication to administer to the Ebola patients through the doorway of the isolation unit in Liberia. Dr. Brantly spent almost four hours in a Tyvek suit in order to care for the three patients in the unit. (RNS Photo courtesy Samaritan's Purse) Kent Brantly, 33, an American doctor who has been working in Liberia since October for the North Carolina-based aid organization [Samaritan's Purse](#), is receiving intensive medical treatment after he was infected with Ebola, according to Melissa Strickland, spokeswoman for the Christian humanitarian group. Brantly, who is married and has two children, is a member of [Southside Church of Christ in Fort Worth](#).

A second U.S. citizen, Nancy Writebol, also has tested positive for Ebola, Samaritan's Purse reported. Writebol is employed by mission group SIM in Liberia and was helping a joint SIM/Samaritan's Purse team treating Ebola patients in Monrovia. Writebol is married with two children, the organization said.

The Ebola epidemic in the West African nations of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea has caused more than 670 deaths and more than 1,000 infections, according to the World Health Organization. Ebola, a severe illness with a fatality rate of up to 90 percent, is one of the world's most virulent diseases, according to the WHO. It is transmitted by direct contact

with the blood, body fluids and tissues of infected animals or people.

✘ String-like Ebola virus particles are shedding from an infected cell in this electron micrograph. (RNS / Creative Commons image by NIAID)The first Liberian doctor to die of the disease was identified as Samuel Brisbane. He was working as a consultant with the internal medicine unit at the country's largest hospital, the John F. Kennedy Memorial Medical Center in Monrovia.

Brisbane, who once was a medical adviser to former Liberian President Charles Taylor, was taken to a treatment center on the outskirts of the capital after falling ill with Ebola and died there, said Tolbert Nyenswah, an assistant health minister.

Another doctor who had been working in Liberia's central Bong County also was being treated for Ebola at the same center where Brisbane died, Nyenswah said, adding the situation "is getting more and more scary."

Recently, the medical humanitarian organization Doctors Without Borders announced that the chief doctor leading the fight against the Ebola epidemic in Sierra Leone, Sheik Umar Khan, had contracted the disease and died. Three nurses who worked in the same Ebola treatment Center as Khan, 39, are believed to have died from the disease.

Doctors Without Borders says it implements "strict infection control measures" to protect its staff in West Africa against the disease. "As well as the personal protective equipment that our staff wears, we have a series of strict procedures and protocols," said the group's emergency coordinator, Marie-Christine Ferir.

"Our treatment centers are designed to ensure the safest possible working environment for our staff. There is sufficient space in-between patients, clear separation between high-risk and low-risk areas, sufficient lighting,

secure waste management and disinfection of the wards.”