

# US Domestic Response to Ebola - Risk Communication and New Lessons Learned

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# **US Domestic Response to Ebola - Risk Communication and New Lessons Learned**

**...And Some Old Lessons Relearned**

# Perspective from CDC Emergency Operations Center



# **What US Public Saw During US Domestic Ebola Response**



## Burial Team Removing Body in Africa

CNN Television Image



## **Team Burying Body in Africa**

CNN Television Image





# Arrival in US of 1<sup>st</sup> Evacuated Ebola Patient

ABC News television image of Dr. Kent Brantly arriving at Emory University Hospital on August 2, 2014



## Arrival in US of 2<sup>nd</sup> of Evacuated Ebola Patient

Fox Television News image of Dr. Nancy Writebol arriving at Emory University Hospital on August 5, 2014





# Hazardous Materials Team At Dallas Apartment

Fox Television News Image of Hazardous Materials Team Assembled  
Outside Dallas Apartment Where Eric Duncan Stayed



## Cleaning Dallas Ebola Patient Apartment

Dallas News October 3, 2014 image of hazardous materials team cleaning apartment where Dallas Ebola patient stayed before hospitalization



## Decontamination after Cleaning Apartment

October 5, 2014 news image of decontamination of worker who cleaned apartment where Dallas Ebola patient stayed prior to hospitalization.



## Decontamination of Car in Dallas

Local Dallas Television Station (WBRZ) image of decontamination of car used to transport Dallas Ebola patient to hospital





## Dallas Ebola Patient on US Media

Photo of Dallas Ebola patient commonly used by US Media. This image used by NBC NEWS with caption "Texas Ebola patient had contact school age kids."



## **Lessons Learned from Ebola in Dallas**

- **Public fear of lethal contagion is powerful**
  - Deeply emotional
  - Disproportionate to actual relative risk
  - Very difficult to mitigate through rational argument
- **24-hour media strongly influences (determines?) public perceptions**
- **Visual images strongly influence (determine?) public perceptions**
- **Media usually choose most powerful visual images**
- **Media/visual images can drive public health response**

## **Lessons Learned from Ebola in Dallas**

- **Evidenced-based public health messages are necessary, but not sufficient to mitigate public fears**
- **Need powerful images –as well as messages – to mitigate fears**



## Nurse Nina Pham on Discharge from Hospital

Press events were held at discharge of Nina Pham from NIH hospital. She is one of two nurses who became Ebola infected caring for Eric Duncan in Dallas. Photo on left shows NIAID Director Anthony Fauci hugging Ms. Pham. Photo on right shows US President Barack Obama hugging Ms. Pham.



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The findings and conclusions in this presentation are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.