

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: NIH Special Clinical Studies Unit**

**Q. What is the NIH Special Clinical Studies Unit?**

A: The Special Clinical Studies Unit (SCSU) is an inpatient unit at the NIH Clinical Center in Bethesda, Md., designed with state-of-the-art infrastructure that allows for isolation capabilities and infection control while patients participate in clinical research studies.

**Q. How long has the SCSU been in operation?**

A: The SCSU has been in operation since the summer of 2010.

**Q. Has the SCSU previously been used to care for patients, and if so, how many and for what purposes?**

A: The unit has been used multiple times to care for patients participating in a variety of NIH clinical research protocols, including influenza studies.

**Q. How is isolation handled in the unit to ensure protection of other patients in the Clinical Center as well as Clinical Center visitors and workers, others who work at or visit the NIH campus, and people in the surrounding community?**

A: Numerous redundant systems and precautions are in place to maintain isolation of the SCSU from the rest of the Clinical Center and the surrounding community. These systems and precautions include special air handling systems, cardkey restricted access, separate entrance and exit pathways for staff, including a shower prior to exit, and protocols for handling waste.

**Q. How would it be determined which patients would come to the SCSU?**

A: Senior NIH leadership is collaborating with partner agencies to determine the priority of referrals to NIH for consideration for hospitalization in the SCSU, should it be required, and would consider each potential patient on a case-by-case basis. Like all patients seen at the NIH Clinical Center, patients coming to the SCSU would volunteer to participate in a NIH clinical protocol.

**Q. Can you release what protocol a patient is participating in or if they are receiving an experimental treatment?**

A: This information is patient confidential and can only be released by the patient themselves or if the patient agrees the information can be released. Like all patients seen at the NIH Clinical Center, patients coming to the SCSU would volunteer to participate in a NIH clinical protocol.

**Q. How long would a person infected with Ebola be expected to remain in the unit?**

A: This would be determined through a patient-specific assessment that depends upon his or her clinical and laboratory status. Patients will not be released from the Unit until it has been demonstrated that the virus cannot be detected by sensitive molecular assays.

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