

US working with small biotech firm on experimental Ebola treatment, Report

The privately held company is working with the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, known as BARDA, to supply the treatment for potential use in patients, Bloomberg News reported, citing a person familiar with the matter.



Bengaluru: U.S. officials are working with Mapp Biopharmaceutical, a small biotech firm, to make an experimental Ebola treatment for people who may have been exposed to

the virus, Bloomberg News reported.

The privately held company is working with the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, known as BARDA, to supply the treatment for potential use in patients, Bloomberg News reported, citing a person familiar with the matter.

BARDA, which functions within the Department of Health and Human Services, funds measures to develop medical supplies to address public health threats.

The Ebola outbreak in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo that likely started two months ago has killed more than 130 people and is expected to continue to grow, the World Health Organization said.

The outbreak, caused by the rare Bundibugyo strain, was declared last week and has alarmed experts because it spread undetected for weeks in a densely populated area.

There is currently no approved vaccine or virus-specific treatment for the Bundibugyo strain, and any potential vaccine could take months to develop.

Six hundred suspected cases and 139 suspected deaths have been recorded so far, with confirmed cases also reported in neighboring Uganda. The WHO has classified the outbreak as a public health emergency of international concern.

First responders have said they lack basic supplies needed to help contain the spread.

Mapp declined to comment on the Bloomberg report when contacted by Reuters, while the Department of Health and Human Services did not immediately respond.

The San Diego-based company focuses on vaccines and medicines for infectious diseases and previously developed an experimental Ebola drug used during the 2014 outbreak.

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