Two passengers aboard Diamond Princess cruise ship die from coronavirus

By Joe Tacopino

Two passengers who were suffering from coronavirus on the Diamond Princess cruise ship off the coast of Japan have died, officials said Wednesday.

Japan’s health ministry said that the two patients — a man and a woman in their 80s — are among the first people aboard the boat who have died from the disease.

Japanese broadcast outlet NHK said the two Japanese cruise passengers were an 87-year-old man and an 84-year-old woman.

Both had existing pulmonary issues, authorities said.

The Diamond Princess, docked in a Yokohama port, near Tokyo, started letting passengers who tested negative for the virus leave the ship Wednesday. Test results are still pending for some people on board.

Japan’s government has been questioned over its decision to keep people on the ship, which some experts have called a perfect virus incubator.

Before the quarantine on the ship had ended, the United States evacuated more than 300 Americans and put them in quarantine in the US for another 14 days. South Korea, Australia and Hong Kong evacuated their residents, while Canada and Italy sent flights for their citizens as well.

With wires