



Additional Legionella Case Confirmed at Covenant Living at the Holmstad in Batavia

October 1, 2019 -- The Kane County Health Department (KCHD) has been informed of another case of Legionnaires disease at Covenant Living at the Holmstad.

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) reports another confirmed case as of September 30. There have been 15 total confirmed cases: 13 at Covenant Living at the Holmstad and two additional cases – one resident of Geneva and one resident of Batavia, within one half mile of the facility.

Based on the available epidemiologic information, the initial environmental assessments were focused on Covenant’s building water systems, cooling tower, and other potential sources on campus. As additional Covenant residents and the two off-site residents were confirmed to have Legionnaires’ disease, IDPH and KCHD expanded their search for possible sources. An environmental assessment was conducted at each of the identified off-site cooling towers and equipment utilized on the Fabyan Parkway Bridge construction project. The Fabyan Parkway project did not test positive for Legionella.

Results of environmental testing identified *Legionella* bacteria on Covenant’s campus and an off-site cooling tower not associated with Covenant Living. The cooling tower that tested positive for Legionella has been shut down and mitigation procedures have been instituted. Legionella control measures have been implemented at all known possible sources of exposure identified by IDPH and KCHD at both Covenant Living and off-site.

A definitive source of Legionella is rarely determined through environmental investigation. Rather, potential and possible sources of exposure are identified and investigated. Legionella control measures are then implemented to stop further exposure and disease. In order to confirm the actual cause, a lower respiratory specimen from an ill case (which is difficult to obtain) would need to closely match genetically an environmental sample, testing positive by culture for *Legionella*, using specialized laboratory testing performed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For that reason, public health focuses on identifying any and all possible sources and implementing activities to control measures, such as disinfection procedures, filters, and restricted water. It is important to note that the existence of Legionella bacteria in and of itself is common and is not always a public health concern, but it is typically in cases where the bacteria are able to grow and become what public health officials refer to as “cultured” that can lead to the infection of humans resulting in symptoms.

(more)

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The public water supplies of both the Cities of Batavia and Geneva are not compromised by this Legionella outbreak. Each city maintains levels of chlorine that meet or exceed that required by the regulations of the State of Illinois to ensure the water is free from Legionella bacteria.

For more information about Legionella, please visit

<https://www.cdc.gov/legionella/about/causes-transmission.html>

For further information and updates, visit the KCHD website at KaneHealth.com.

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