



Governor visits Quincy veterans home following new cases of Legionnaires' disease

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QUINCY – Governor Bruce Rauner visited the Quincy Veterans Home this morning after two cases of Legionnaires’ disease were confirmed in residents of the Quincy home. The Illinois Department of Veterans’ Affairs (IDVA) is working with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Adams County Health Department, in consultation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to determine

where the residents acquired the Legionella bacteria. Due to the nature of the bacteria, the source may never be determined, but the Quincy home is taking all precautions to ensure the safety and welfare of residents and staff.

“Our first priority is making sure that we are providing the safest conditions possible for our veterans. Last year we took extensive steps to create a new water treatment facility to reduce the bacteria, but even with these steps there is a chance of contagion due to the bacteria itself,” said Governor Rauner. “Upon learning about the potential of Legionnaires’ at Quincy this week, I instructed all of our state agencies to take the utmost caution to protect our residents and staff at the home. We continue to do everything possible to further mitigate any further contamination.”

In order to be infected with Legionella bacteria, a person must inhale contaminated water vapor. The bacteria thrives in warm water, and contaminated sources can include showers, faucets, hot tubs and cooling towers. It is important to note that Legionnaires’ disease, in general, cannot be transmitted person-to-person. Most of the time Legionella bacteria does not cause harm, but the bacteria poses a larger threat to those with impaired immune systems and the elderly.

“The Illinois Department of Public Health is working with local public health officials, the veterans’ home and the CDC to monitor residents for respiratory illness and make sure they receive care immediately,” said IDPH Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. “IDPH will continue to work with our state and local partners to try to identify potential sources of the Legionella bacteria and prevent future illnesses.”

Yesterday, the Governor, in consultation with the Directors of IDVA and IDPH, set in motion the process to prepare for additional water restrictions until the source of the contamination is better understood. The home also halted any new admission into the Quincy home. The restrictions will be in place until it is deemed safe to continue using the plumbing system throughout the facility.

“We are continuing to implement every necessary precaution to ensure the health and safety of all residents and staff at our Veteran’s Home. That is our number one priority.” said IDVA Director Erica Jeffries.

In September 2015, the IDVA began implementing recommendations to control Legionella bacteria that may have been in the plumbing systems. Renovation included construction of a water treatment plant capable of providing higher quality water for the home’s sensitive population through thermal and chemical treatment to control bacteria. They also made valve replacements and many miscellaneous repairs to address the existing water distribution system. IDVA will continue implementing procedures to test for and flush any harmful bacteria from the plumbing system and is maintaining hot

water temperatures at 150°F. Additionally, IDVA is in the process of engaging a consultant who is an expert on infectious diseases, including Legionella, to assist in the analysis.

The Governor will receive regular updates from all state agencies involved and will continue to monitor the situation closely to ensure the best care for the residents and staff at Quincy.