

IDPH, IDVA wrap up CDC consultation as Legionnaires' test results received

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Quincy, IL – Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D., and Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) Director Erica Jeffries today issued the following statement following the debriefing of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) team's visit to the Illinois Veterans Home at Quincy (IVHQ):

“We want to thank our partners at CDC for their hard work and dedication in helping us ensure the health and safety of our veterans. Our Departments have been implementing all of the CDC's past recommendations to reduce the risk of Legionnaires’ disease in our most vulnerable residents. While these steps have made an impact, we look forward to the CDC's insight and advice on other scientific measures we can implement to further reduce the risk of infection.”

Since the first report of new Legionnaires’ disease infections at IVHQ was announced last month, 24 veterans were tested – with 21 negative results and three positive results. All three positive cases are recovering. These results compare to 54 confirmed cases last year and follow IDVA's robust implementation of a comprehensive water management plan, the construction of a new water treatment facility and other steps to reduce the risk of exposure.

Legionella bacteria grow in areas of warm water and are often present in water supplies. The goal of our efforts is to reduce concentrations of the bacteria to a level that protects the health of residents and staff. In order to be infected with the bacteria, a person must inhale contaminated water mist. Legionnaires’ disease cannot be transmitted person-to-person. Common water sources include decorative fountains, hot tubs, shower areas, and cooling towers.