

# **IDVA and IDPH Investigating Single Case of Legionnaires' Disease at Quincy Veterans' Home**

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**QUINCY** – The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) are investigating a single case of Legionnaires' disease in a resident at the Illinois Veterans Home – Quincy (IVHQ). The resident tested positive for COVID-19 on November 30, 2020 and presented with symptoms of pneumonia on December 16, 2020. The resident was treated in the ER and as a matter of course tested for legionella. IDVA received notification of the positive test on December 22, 2020. The resident is responding well to medical treatment and is recovering at

IVHQ. As required, notifications have been sent to families of residents, posted on the IDVA and IDPH websites, and posted throughout the facility. Staff have been notified during shift meetings. Residents and staff will continue to be monitored closely for symptoms that may be related to legionella.

Legionella has not previously been found in Hammond Hall, the building in which this resident resides. Accordingly, the building was on a quarterly testing schedule. The last legionella test was conducted October 27, 2020 and was negative. No other cases have been identified and IVHQ continues to follow its plans to monitor residents for respiratory illness. New piping was recently installed in the facility which receives water directly from the City of Quincy. A pall filter was installed on the pipe leading into the building.

Testing of the areas the resident was in as well as up flow and down flow of those rooms was conducted immediately. These included Hammond Hall and the Fifer building. Results from such tests typically take 11-13 days to return.

The last case of Legionnaires' disease at IVHQ was December 21, 2019 and was in the Fifer building. Water tests immediately following the case were found to be negative. Since that time, the Fifer building has been on a water testing schedule conducted every two weeks. The last test was conducted on December 8, 2020 and the previous was November 24, 2020. Both were negative. There are pall filters on all point of use locations in the Fifer building.

Following the positive test result on December 22, 2020, a call was conducted which included the Adams County Health Department, the Illinois Department of Public Health, the CDC, USDVA, facility staff and Dr. Avery Hart, medical consultant for the IDVA homes on behalf of IDPH. On the call, the CDC asked for clean out and flushing logs which are part of the water management plan for the facility. All actions by the Illinois Veterans' Home in Quincy are consistent with the water management plan following CDC protocols.

IDPH infectious disease staff are working with the facility to collect information and further investigate the resident's illness. IVHQ has notified residents, staff, and families or power-of-attorneys. IVHQ continues to operate a robust water management program and is implementing best practices to control the growth and spread of waterborne pathogens. IVHQ provides additional water treatment, including filtration and disinfection, prior to use on its campus. IVHQ also maintains point of use filters on all fixtures in residential areas to reduce the possibility of transmission to susceptible individuals. IVHQ continues to conduct active surveillance for *Legionella* by monitoring residents and reviewing water quality data on an ongoing basis.

*Legionella* bacteria occur naturally in the environment. Water containing *Legionella* can be aerosolized through cooling towers, showers, hot tubs, and decorative fountains, and can cause Legionnaire's disease, a serious lung infection (pneumonia) when inhaled. Legionnaires' disease is not passed from person to person. Illnesses are most commonly associated with buildings or structures that have complex water systems like hotels, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and cruise ships. The bacteria can become a health concern when they grow and spread in human-made water systems, like hot tubs, cooling towers, hot water tanks, large plumbing systems, and decorative fountains. Most healthy people do not get Legionnaires' disease after being exposed to *Legionella* bacteria.

More information about Legionnaires' disease can be found on the [IDPH website](#) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [website](#).