FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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IDPH Posts Most Recent CDC Report

Legionellosis cases increase in summer months

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has posted the most recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report addressing Legionella bacteria at the Illinois Veterans Home in Quincy (IVHQ). IDPH requested onsite technical assistance from the CDC after confirming Legionnaires’ disease cases in February 2018. CDC generated the report after a visit that same month by an epidemiologist, microbiologist, and an Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer to IVHQ.

CDC conclusions:
- Overall findings from the review of the water management program, environmental sampling results from IVHQ’s Legionella consultant, and interviews with IDPH and IVHQ staff were consistent with the January 2018 report.
- Enhancements were made to IVHQ’s pneumonia surveillance and testing protocols.
- Despite the considerable time, effort, and resources committed to achieving an optimal water management program at IVHQ, there continues to be Legionella growth and cases of Legionnaires’ disease associated with the Elmore and Somerville buildings. The cases are likely attributable to plumbing age and materials and resident population characteristics.
- The advanced age and underlying medical conditions common among IVHQ residents means they are highly susceptible to Legionnaires’ disease, and that some disease risk will remain irrespective of location. Wherever susceptible populations reside, effective water management is paramount.

To help ensure an optimal water management plan remains in place, IDPH periodically visits IVHQ to observe implementation and provide technical assistance.

As we head into summer and the weather warms up, Legionella bacteria become more common. Temperatures between 90-105º F are ideal for the bacteria to grow. IDPH is sending information to licensed health care facilities across the state reminding them of the importance of a robust water management plan, along with information specifically about Legionnaires’ disease prevention.

The latest CDC report can be found on the IDPH website.

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