



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IDPH Investigating *Legionella* Possibly Associated with a Chicago Hospital

Two patients at University of Chicago Medical Center test positive

SPRINGFIELD - The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is investigating two clinical cases of Legionnaires' disease in individuals who were both patients at the University of Chicago Medical Center. The investigation is currently limited to this facility; the general public is not at risk.

IDPH is working with the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the hospital to collect information and further investigate these cases, including an on-site joint visit by IDPH and CDPH this week to test the facility's water. The hospital has reported to public health officials that it conducts extensive testing of its water and those test results have been negative for the *Legionella* bacteria. The individuals were patients at the hospital for part of the time when they could have been exposed to the bacteria. Both individuals also received care elsewhere during the same period.

The facility has worked with IDPH and has already provided information to impacted patients and families about *Legionella*. Additionally, the facility is conducting surveillance to identify other potential cases and to ensure appropriate testing and clinical management.

The hospital and its water management team are working with IDPH and CDPH to strengthen its water management practices. The facility routinely follows protective measures such as flushing the water systems and altering or replacing water fixtures.

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. Outbreaks 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](#).

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