



ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IDOC and IDPH Investigating Legionnaires' Disease Cases at Pontiac Correctional Center

SPRINGFIELD - The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) are investigating two cases of Legionnaires' disease at the Pontiac Correctional Center. The two individuals are in the hospital and stable. No other cases have been identified and IDOC continues to follow its plans to monitor offenders for respiratory illness.

IDPH infectious disease staff are working with the facility to collect information and further investigate the illnesses while environmental health staff are conducting a water quality assessment. IDOC will continue to conduct active surveillance for *Legionella* bacteria by monitoring those incarcerated in the facility. The facility receives its water from the City of Pontiac and will begin a water quality testing program through an outside laboratory to monitor water quality data on an ongoing basis.

Legionella bacteria occur naturally in the environment. Water containing *Legionella* can be aerosolized through cooling towers, and showers, and can cause Legionnaire's disease, a serious lung infection (pneumonia) when inhaled. Legionnaires' disease is not passed from person to person. Illnesses such as Legionnaires disease are most commonly associated with buildings or structures that have complex water systems like hospitals and long-term care facilities. The bacteria can become a health concern when they grow and spread in human-made water systems. 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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