



**2013-08-04-059 Legionellosis - USA (05): (OH) fatal, retirement community
To: (03) Food-borne, water-borne and air-borne diseases; (05) Bacteriology, general; (12)
Scientific Information, research and education;**

LEGIONELLOSIS - USA (05): (OHIO) FATAL, RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

A ProMED-mail post

Date: Fri 26 Jul 2013

Source: The Columbus Dispatch [edited]

<<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2013/07/24/Two-more-deaths-blamed-on-Legionnaires-outbreak.html>>

Two more people have died from legionnaires' disease at a Reynoldsburg retirement community, bringing the total deaths to 4 and those sickened to 35. It is the largest legionnaires' [disease] outbreak in Franklin County in recent memory, county health commissioner Susan Tilgner said yesterday [25 Jul 2013].

State health officials could not say where the outbreak ranks in Ohio history, but a 2011 outbreak that sickened 11 people treated at a Dayton hospital was billed at the time as the largest in the state since 1994.

Wesley Ridge Retirement Community superheated its water system yesterday [25 Jul 2013] for the 2nd time on the recommendation of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]. Legionnaires' [disease], a disease caused by legionella bacteria in water systems, is spread through infected mist or water droplets and is not contagious.

Preliminary results from CDC testing showed the bacteria in more than one location in the facility at 2225 Taylor Park Dr., including an air-conditioning cooling tower, but health officials have yet to determine precisely how people have been sickened.

"We're getting closer to figuring out what might be happening," Tilgner said. More information from interviews with people who've been ill is coming together, and the county is expecting more results soon from additional CDC tests, she said. Tilgner said she's hopeful that the source of the infection has been contained and that illnesses and deaths will stop as more time elapses since Wesley Ridge 1st took precautions against the bacteria. "We are still seeing people getting ill who were getting exposed before we knew about the problem," she said.

The disease usually affects people who have a weakened immune system. Symptoms usually develop within 10 days of exposure to the bacteria and can include fever, chills, coughing, muscle aches, headaches, fatigue, and loss of appetite.

About 225 people live in the community, and 10 or so others visit every day for adult daycare, said Margaret Carmany, the chief executive officer of Wesley Ridge, which is owned by Methodist ElderCare Services.

Overall, 28 people have been hospitalized because of the disease, but no one has been taken to a hospital since Saturday [20 Jul 2013], Carmany said. Those affected are employees, residents, and visitors and range in age from 63 to 99 years.

Residents are drinking only bottled water and are using showers that were fitted with CDC-approved filtering shower heads on Monday [22 Jul 2013], Carmany said. Residents were previously going to nearby buildings off-site to shower.

Health officials said it hasn't made sense to move people out of Wesley Ridge. It could be especially hard on those who are already medically fragile, said Ohio Department of Health spokeswoman Tessie Pollock.



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Tilgner said the residents are "better off being there with those precautions in place than to try to move them. They could get exposed somewhere else. It's out there. We see legionellosis cases all year long, and this is the time of year we tend to see more."

The disease has not interrupted food service or activities. The kitchen is using bottled water to cook, and the in-house hair salon for residents is using bottled water.

[byline: Misti Crane]

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[Wesley Ridge Retirement Community offers independent and assisted living, skilled nursing, long-term care, and rehabilitation services, inpatient and outpatient dementia care, and hospice care in a variety of building types on a campus in suburban Reynoldsburg, Ohio (<<http://www.wesleyridge.com/services#sthash.U8bzQfz6.dpuf>>).

Reynoldsburg, with a population of 35 893 in 2010, is suburb of Columbus, the capital of and largest city in the US state of Ohio.

Legionnaires' disease is the acute pneumonic form of legionellosis and is caused usually by inhaling aerosols containing *Legionella* species. Water temperatures of 25-40 C (77-104 F) support the highest concentrations of the organism in water storage tanks of a building's plumbing system. Aerosols of the contaminated water can be generated by showers, spa pools, fountains, and cooling towers. People usually do not become infected by drinking legionella-contaminated water, unless the contaminated water is aspirated into the lungs of a susceptible person, so under most circumstances, it is safe to drink tap water. Nevertheless, a susceptible person who would likely aspirate contaminated water would also be likely to have been exposed to aerosols of the contaminated water. Person-to-person transmission does not occur.

Although healthy individuals can contract this disease, Legionnaires' disease attacks more frequently and is more severe in individuals who are elderly, smokers, alcoholics, or who have an underlying illness such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), or a weakened immune system as a result of, for example, organ transplant or taking immunosuppressive drugs (such as corticosteroid therapy) for other reasons. Retirement communities often house many of these relatively vulnerable people.

For a discussion of legionnaires' disease, see moderator ML's comments in the prior ProMED-mail post Legionellosis - UK: (Scotland) 20130703.1805239. - Mod.ML

A HealthMap/ProMED-mail map can be accessed at <<http://healthmap.org/r/2uyX>>.]

[see also:

Legionellosis - USA (04): (WI) increased incidence 20130723.1841434 Legionellosis - USA (03): (OH) fatal, retirement community

20130720.1835445

Legionellosis - UK (02): (Scotland) another case 20130717.1830879 Legionellosis - USA (02): (MI) RFI 20130711.1820524 Legionellosis - UK: (Scotland) 20130703.1805239 Legionellosis - Australia

(02): (QL), nosocomial, fatal, RFI

20130606.1759063

Legionellosis - Argentina: (BA) nosocomial, fatal, RFI

20130326.1604475

Legionellosis - USA: (PA) nosocomial, CDC investigation

20130226.1560035

Legionellosis - Australia: (VI) fatal, cooling tower susp.

20130124.1513286

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Legionellosis - USA (07): (PA) nosocomial 20121124.1422656 Legionellosis - USA (06): post-Hurricane 20121110.1403819]
