

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FOR MORE INFORMATION
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Update on Outbreak of Legionnaire's Disease Associated with the area of Ashworth Avenue at Hampton, NH

Concord, NH – The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) continues to investigate an outbreak of Legionnaire's Disease associated with the Ashworth Avenue area of Hampton, NH. A total of 12 people have been identified with confirmed Legionnaire's disease, a potentially serious bacterial pneumonia caused by the Legionella bacteria. These 12 people likely acquired their infections between early June and mid-August in the Hampton area. One of these 12 people, an elderly adult, has died due to complications related to Legionnaire's disease.

DPHS and experts from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are working diligently to identify a potential source of the bacteria and possible additional cases of Legionnaire's disease. The majority of cases stayed or resided in the Ashworth Avenue area between Island Path and M Street but may have had other exposures in the area. As a precautionary measure, DPHS has closed the hot tub spas at the Sands Hotel and the Harris Sea Ranch Motel because hot tub spas in general are a known source of the bacteria that causes Legionnaire's. The hot tubs no longer present a potential risk to the public and both hotels remain open.

While we believe that the current overall health risk to the community is low, individuals who are at higher risk of Legionnaire's disease should continue to take steps to protect their health, including consideration of postponing their visit to the area if they are concerned about their health and talking to their healthcare providers. People with increased risk of getting sick from Legionella include:

- People with weakened immune systems
- People who take drugs that can weaken their immune systems (after a transplant operation or chemotherapy)
- People with chronic lung disease
- Current or former smokers
- People with underlying illnesses such as diabetes, kidney failure, or liver failure
- People 50 years or older

“We are working hard to identify the exact source of these infections,” said Lisa Morris, Director of the Division of Public Health Services. “Even though the information is preliminary, we want to allow the public to make informed decisions about visiting the area and their activities in the area.”

“Federal, state and local authorities are working cooperatively and diligently to address this situation and help mitigate any additional health risks,” stated Governor Chris Sununu. “Through regular communication and transparency, we will ensure members of the public have the most up

to date information so that they can make the best decisions for themselves and their families.”

Legionnaires’ disease is a type of pneumonia caused by the Legionella bacteria. Most people exposed to Legionella will not get sick; however, it can cause severe illness and sometimes result in death. Legionnaire’s disease is acquired from breathing in small drops of water than contain the bacteria. It cannot be passed from person to person contact. It cannot be contracted by drinking or coming into physical contact with water containing the bacteria (such as while swimming).

Legionnaires’ disease symptoms are very similar to other types of pneumonia and can include cough, shortness of breath, fever, muscle aches, and headaches. Symptoms will usually begin within 2 to 10 days after exposure to the bacteria. However, people should watch for symptoms for about two weeks after exposure. People who visited the area more than two weeks ago and have not developed symptoms are not at risk for disease. If an individual visited this area and developed symptoms within 14 days of their stay, they should contact their healthcare provider and seek medical attention.

If you have information or questions about this outbreak, please call the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services Public Inquiry Line by calling 603-271-9461, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, including weekends.

For further information, please visit the CDC webpage dedicated to the outbreak at <https://www.cdc.gov/legionella/index.html>.

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