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Eight in Turtle Creek get Legionnaires' disease

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Eight people living at the LGAR Health & Rehabilitation Center in Turtle Creek contracted Legionnaires' disease, an Allegheny County Health Department official said Tuesday.

Legionnaires' disease, caused by a bacteria called Legionella, mimics pneumonia and can cause a high fever, chills, a cough, muscle aches and headaches, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Bruce Dixon, director of the Allegheny County Health Department, said no one has died and the center is taking extra precautions to prevent it from spreading.

Dr. Dixon said the center has switched to using bottled water and is using a heavy metal iron system hospitals employ to prevent the spread of the bacteria.

He said Legionella often spreads when facilities install systems to prevent water from scalding people, causing it to lower in temperature and sometimes become tepid. He said he did not know what caused the Legionella to appear in the LGAR facility.

Representatives for LGAR could not be reached for comment Tuesday evening.

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