

Legionnaires' disease strikes resident at Warren Haven nursing home

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By [Phillip Molnar | The Express-Times](#)

A resident at [Warren Haven nursing home](#) contracted Legionnaires' disease and the facility has implemented what the administrator there calls a **"containment program."**

The patient was diagnosed with the potentially fatal lung infection Sept. 14, said Laura Decker, administrator at the Warren County-run facility.

The disease is caused by the bacteria Legionella, an aquatic organism that is usually spread after a person inhales water mist or vapor, according to the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

Residents are drinking only bottled water and have filters on their showers, Decker said.

"There is no inconvenience to the residents," she said.

The disease cannot spread from person to person, but can be very dangerous for those with weak immune systems or lung complications, the CDC says. It can cause death in 5 to 30 percent of cases, according to the federal agency.

The [New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services](#) hired a consulting agency to do water testing at the facility and implement the prevention program, Decker said.

"We are following all of their protocols," she said. **"Really that's it. That's the end of the story."**

[Warren County Health](#) Officer Peter Summers said the resident who contracted the disease is fine and that a water test Tuesday came back negative for Legionella. He said Warren Haven must still wait for the state to give the OK to end the containment effort.

He said the state will require additional testing over the next several months.

"Legionella is hard to find in the environment and so it needs a series of testing on it," Summers said.

He said this is the fifth or sixth unrelated case of the disease the county health department has investigated this year, something he contributes to **"a combination of better testing and more awareness."**

Symptoms of the disease may include fever, chills and cough, according to the state health department. Some people may also have muscle pain, headaches and diarrhea.

Most often, symptoms begin five to six days after exposure, the state says.

Authorities revealed the diagnosis after being asked about it by a reporter. Warren County's public information director, [Art Charlton](#), said the public was not informed previously because it was just one diagnosis.

"If there was a widespread outbreak ... that might be another case," he said.

"There's all sorts of infections people get and we don't report on every one."

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