

## Rehab center resident dies after developing Legionnaires' disease

A resident of a Gold Coast rehab center has died after being infected with Legionella and testing positive for Legionnaires' disease, according to the Chicago Department of Public Health.

The department released a statement overnight saying it "has confirmed a fatal case of Legionella in a Chicago individual who was a resident of Warren Barr in the Gold Coast."

The statement did not give the age or gender of the person or any other circumstances of the death. The department said it didn't know how the person was infected.

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2

Warren Barr is a rehab facility on Oak Street between State and Clark streets in the Gold Coast. No one from the facility was available to answer questions early Tuesday.

The death is the only known case among residents or employees at the center, according to the city statement.

"Legionella can be serious for some individuals, such as the elderly or those with a weakened immune system, but it is treatable," the health department said in a further statement Tuesday afternoon. The department went on to say that it "is working closely with the healthcare facility to determine possible sources of exposure and to identify mitigating factors in the case recently identified.

"In this case, the individual who contracted Legionella was more susceptible to the illness due to several risk factors, including age and a weakened immune system. No other cases have been reported at this time but we will continue to monitor the situation closely."

The Cook County medical examiner's office had no information about the death.

Legionella is a type of bacteria found in water or water systems that can cause Legionnaires' disease, a severe form of pneumonia, as well as Pontiac fever, a milder illness resembling the flu, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Most people get Legionnaires' disease from inhaling the bacteria. Older adults, smokers and people with weakened immune systems are particularly susceptible to Legionnaires' disease. Symptoms include fever, coughing, fatigue and shortness of breath.

Pontiac fever usually clears on its own, but untreated Legionnaires' disease can be fatal. Although prompt

treatment with antibiotics usually cures Legionnaires' disease, some people continue to experience problems after treatment, according to the Mayo Clinic.

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