

# 2 veterans diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease in Columbus



LOCAL NEWS

10TV WEB STAFF

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**COLUMBUS, Ohio** – Two veterans in Columbus have been diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease according to a spokesperson with the Columbus VA Ambulatory Care Center.

A total of five patients have presented with symptoms consistent with Legionella. The source of the bacteria is still being investigated, according to Carl Higginbotham, a public affairs specialist with the VA.

Out of an abundance of caution, Columbus VA leadership has taken measures to ensure the safety of its patients and staff by issuing water restrictions and closing all water fountains at the Chalmers P. Wylie Veterans Outpatient Clinic, while the units are tested for Legionella.

Testing of all 26 fountains can take up to three days. During this time, bottled water will be provided to all patients and staff members. Updates will be provided, once definitive facility testing and clinical information are available.

As of June 26, 41 confirmed cases of Legionnaires' disease have been reported to Columbus Public Health. Of 41 total cases, 26 have been reported during June which is consistent with the seasonal increase of cases during the summer. Intensive investigation of all Legionnaires' disease cases is underway; however to date, no links or outbreaks among the cases have been identified.

Higginbotham said one of the patients was diagnosed at Mount Carmel East and is still being treated there.

The other patient was diagnosed at the urgent care center at the VA, is back at home for treatment, and was never hospitalized.

Both patients have been seen at the VA over the last couple months and both go to the VA for primary care, according to Higginbotham.

Doctors are looking into if there is a connection between the two patients.

A timeline for when the patients were diagnosed was not immediately available.

The bacteria that causes Legionnaires' disease usually grow in closed water systems.

People can get sick if they inhale mist or vapor from contaminated systems.