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## June 1, 2019 - Health Department advises of potential exposure to Legionella bacteria

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), the Springfield-Greene County Health Department, and Mercy Springfield are working together to investigate two cases of Legionnaires' Disease reported since late-April among individuals who visited Mercy's outpatient cancer center in Springfield. A *Legionella* species—although not the species usually

associated with Legionnaires' Disease—was recovered in water samples reported on May 31, 2019. This indicates that conditions are conducive to *Legionella* growth within the water system of this facility. However, there is no guarantee that this was the source of illness.

DHSS is advising, out of an abundance of caution, of a potential health concern for individuals that may have been in contact with a water source within the cancer center. The facility is located at [2055 S. Fremont Avenue, Springfield, MO 65804](#). This advisory does not include any other facilities on the hospital campus.

Mercy is currently reaching out to patients who have been seen within the cancer center in the last three weeks, so that they are aware of the investigation and know what signs and symptoms to watch for. Mercy has a routine testing and treatment protocol for water systems within their facilities, and they are actively following steps given to them by DHSS to mitigate this potential concern.

Legionnaires' disease is a serious type of pneumonia acquired by breathing in small water droplets containing certain types of *Legionella* bacteria. *Legionella* commonly occurs in nature and not everyone who is exposed to the bacteria will contract an illness. Risk may be greater if you are 50 years or older, smoke cigarettes, or have certain medical conditions, such as a weakened immune system. People do not spread Legionnaires' disease to other people.

If you develop symptoms of pneumonia within two weeks of visiting Mercy's outpatient cancer center in Springfield, seek medical attention right away. Symptoms typically include cough, shortness of breath, fever, muscle aches, headaches, confusion, nausea, or diarrhea.

Additional information on Legionella is available from the CDC website at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/legionella/index.html>.

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