

Three people diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease all went to same resort



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WISCONSIN DELLS, Wis. (WMTV) -- Three people diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease, including one person who died, all went to the same resort, according to the Sauk County Health Department.

Tara Hayes, Director of the Sauk County Health Department, said they cannot pinpoint where exactly the three people contracted the disease.

"When there's a reportable disease you do questionnaires with the individuals," said Hayes. "You're trying to find a history of any potential exposures, and so going through the investigation we would've determined what the patients' possible exposures were, and then looked into those sites."

Hayes said that from that, they learned that all three people had been at the Christmas Mountain Village in Wisconsin Dells since late 2017. Hayes said the three cases were in late 2017 and October 2018. The water at the resort was tested.

"We had received a report that some individuals contracted Legionnaires' disease, so that prompted us to do an investigation with Christmas Mountain," Hayes said. "During that investigation with the sampling of the water, there have been some units that have tested positive for the Legionella bacteria."

Bluegreen Management is the management company for the property. In a statement from a Bluegreen Communications Spokesperson, the company said, "It was our understanding (via the health department) that there have been multiple cases reported across the region, in which only three cases reported to the health department are from guests that have stayed at the property within the last 24 months. There is no conclusive evidence that they contracted the Legionella bacteria during their stay at the property."



Hayes said that they are unable to tell exactly where the individuals got the disease.

"What I can say is that three individuals were diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease, and the resort did test positive with Legionella in their water system," she said.

Hayes said the resort is fully cooperating with the Sauk County Health Department. They are requiring the resort to notify guests when they make a reservation to be aware of the risks, as well as informing them of the risks and symptoms of the disease upon check in. Hayes also said the department required the resort to use filters to reduce exposure.

In a statement, a Bluegreen spokesperson said, "After testing, we found that the water supply in certain units had been affected and, subsequently, tested positive for the bacteria. Our guest's safety is our number one concern. We are working closely with the Sauk County Health department and implemented a recommended risk reduction measure in addition to ongoing water management and remediation. All accommodations have been equipped with point of use filters that effectively eliminate 99% risk of exposure to the Legionella bacteria."

Legionnaires' disease comes from Legionella bacteria, said Hayes.

"It's an illness that you get by contracting the bacterium Legionella. Legionella is a bacterium that can be found naturally in fresh water and moist environments such as lakes and rivers," Hayes said. "Legionella can also be found in some man made water systems."

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