

September 16, 2006

Fourth community resident has Legionnaires' disease

Montgomery County facility cancels open house as precaution.

A fourth person at a retirement community in Upper Frederick Township, Montgomery County has been diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease, which is a pneumonia-like infection of the lungs.

Officials at the Frederick Mennonite Community said the fourth case, which involved a resident who had been hospitalized, was the first instance of the disease spreading outside of the independent-living portion of the campus. The previous infections were reported on April 26, Aug. 18 and Wednesday. The community decided to cancel an open house scheduled for today as a precaution.

The most common symptoms of Legionnaires' disease include fever, chills and a cough. The disease is not passed from person to person.

Most people contract the disease by breathing mist from a water source. The name of the disease comes from an outbreak at a 1976 American Legion convention in Philadelphia where 34 people died.

The three other people who contracted the disease are 85-year-old residents of the independent living section of the community.

Officials at the Frederick Mennonite Community did not release any information about the fourth victim.

Montgomery County officials are investigating the outbreak.

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