

Five cases of Legionnaires' disease confirmed

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By LAKE COUNTY JOURNAL

WAUKEGAN – The Lake County Health Department continues to investigate an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease at the Brookdale Vernon Hills senior living facility on Milwaukee Avenue in Vernon Hills.

Since receiving initial reports of Legionnaires' disease at the facility, a total of five confirmed cases have been identified, including one death.

"Together with the Illinois Department of Public Health and Brookdale staff, we took immediate action to investigate this outbreak and prevent additional exposure to Legionella bacteria at the facility," said Mark Pfister, executive director of the Lake County Health Department. "As a result, preventive measures are in place and no new cases have been reported within the past week."

Results from the environmental investigation confirmed the presence of Legionella bacteria in samples collected at the facility Feb. 5 before full preventive measures were implemented. Legionella bacteria were detected in one apartment, a pool filter, an irrigation system and a decorative water fountain.

Several measures have been implemented at the Brookdale facility to prevent exposure to Legionella bacteria, including point-of-use filters. Thermal disinfection of the water system was performed the week of Feb. 10, and hyperchlorination of the water system is scheduled.

Because infection from Legionella occurs when a person inhales water mist or vapor containing the bacteria, water features have been turned off and the facility's pool and spa have been drained. These measures will remain in place and will be reevaluated after additional environmental testing results are received.

Residents and visitors of the Brookdale Vernon Hills facility who are experiencing pneumonia symptoms – cough, shortness of breath, headache, muscle aches and fever – are encouraged to see a doctor right away to be tested for Legionnaires' disease.

For information about Legionella, visit www.cdc.gov/legionella/about/causes-transmission.html. For updates, visit the Lake County Health Department website at health.lakecountyil.gov.

1 dead, 2 sick from Legionnaires' at Illinois senior center

 [seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/1-dead-2-sick-from-legionnaires-at-illinois-senior-center/](https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/1-dead-2-sick-from-legionnaires-at-illinois-senior-center/)

DON BABWIN

CHICAGO (AP) — An outbreak of Legionnaires' disease at a senior living center in suburban Chicago has left one resident dead and two others sickened, health officials said Wednesday.

The Lake County Health Department said in a news release that it has confirmed three cases of the disease, a type of severe pneumonia caused by the Legionella bacteria, at Brookdale Senior Living in Vernon Hills. The release says staffers at the facility were notifying residents and others who may have been exposed to the bacteria and were working with state and county health departments to determine "potential sources of contamination."

"We urge any residents and visitors of the Brookdale facility who are currently experiencing pneumonia symptoms — cough, shortness of breath, headache, muscle aches and fever — to see a doctor right away for testing," Dr. Sana Ahmed, the health department's medical epidemiologist, said in the release. "Early treatment of Legionnaires' disease reduces the severity of the illness and improves your chances for recovery."

The health department would only say that the person who died was over the age of 80 as were the two people who became sick, and that all three became ill within the last month.

A spokeswoman for Brookdale said in a statement that the facility has turned off all fountains and closed the pool and spa in response to the disease, which is caused by inhaling water vapor infected with Legionella bacteria.

Spokeswoman Heather Hunter also wrote, "We are following the recommendation of national water treatment company regarding flushing water lines, cleaning shower heads and adding filters."

Last year, a state audit was critical of the Department of Public Health and Veterans' Affairs for delays in taking action and notifying nursing staff and the public about a 2015 outbreak at an Illinois veterans' home in Quincy that left 13 elderly residents dead. The same audit contradicted former Gov. Bruce Rauner's contention that his administration had done everything that federal experts recommended it do to remedy the crisis.