Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs

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Legionnaires' Disease Update For Quincy Veterans' Home

QUINCY – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is reporting two laboratory-confirmed cases of Legionnaires' disease among Illinois Veterans' Home residents. Both residents are at the Illinois Veterans Home Quincy (IVHQ) and are doing well.

After learning of the lab-confirmed cases, IVHQ engineering staff immediately removed faucets from the residents' rooms and collected water samples and mixing valves to analyze for the presence of *Legionella* bacteria. Staff also increased water temperatures and flushed fixtures to provide an enhanced level of protection for residents.

The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs and IDPH continue to collaborate with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Adams County Health Department to coordinate the safety and well-being of the residents and staff at the home. An investigation is underway to identify where the residents may have acquired the bacteria.

Legionella bacteria occur naturally in the environment. As such, the source is rarely identified in cases of Legionnaires' disease. Approximately 300 cases of Legionnaires' disease are reported each year across in Illinois.

The IVHQ completed an extensive renovation of its plumbing systems last year in response to the 2015 Legionnaires' disease outbreak. Renovations included construction of a water treatment plant capable of providing higher-quality water for the Home's sensitive population. IDVA continues to test and treat its water for harmful bacteria, including *Legionella*. Along with additional chlorine treatments, IVHQ maintains hot water at 150 degrees to prevent the growth of *Legionella*. Hot water is then mixed with cold water to a temperature of 110 degrees, which allows for the maximum control of bacteria while protecting residents from scalding.

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