



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Lauderdale County Health Department reports additional case of Legionella pneumonia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dr. Karen Landers, Assistant State Health Officer, Alabama Department of Public Health, reports one new positive Legionella pneumonia case in Lauderdale County. Local health authorities, with technical assistance and support of the ADPH Central Office and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, are now investigating 11 cases and 8 suspect cases.

Legionella pneumonia is not spread from person to person. People get the disease when they breathe in a mist or vapor containing the bacteria. Most healthy people exposed to the germ do not become sick. Those at higher risk for getting sick are people who are older than 50, are current or former smokers, have chronic lung problems such as COPD, have weak immune systems from cancer, diabetes, or kidney failure, or are on chemotherapy.

Legionella pneumonia is caused by a germ that occurs naturally in the environment. The germ grows best in warm water. Some places where the germ can be found include hot tubs, cooling towers, hot water tanks, large plumbing systems and decorative fountains.

As part of the process, the health department is working with physicians and hospitals, talking with the patients who had Legionella pneumonia, and checking for any potential environmental sources of the germ. The doctors and hospitals continue to work very closely with the health department to test any patients who could have Legionella pneumonia.

“We want to continue looking into these cases carefully to be sure that we raise awareness of this illness and recommend any actions to reduce environmental risks,” Dr. Landers said. For additional information, please contact your local health department.