



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Alabama Department of Public Health continues investigation of *Legionella* pneumonia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health continues to investigate a *Legionella* pneumonia outbreak in Florence, Ala. At this time, all known cases have been associated with Glenwood Nursing Home facility.

Dr. Karen Landers, Assistant State Health Officer for the Alabama Department of Public Health, reports that there are 13 patients with confirmed *Legionella* pneumonia. Ten patients are suspected to have had *Legionella* pneumonia but test results on these patients are not back from the laboratory. One death from *Legionella* pneumonia is included in the 13 reported cases. No new patients have been identified since Oct. 10. Dr. Landers states, "The health department continues to work very closely with the physicians and hospitals to find any new patients."

The Glenwood facility remains open and operational, is cooperating fully with public health officials, and has performed recommended remediation steps although no water vapor generating sources have been identified at the facility at this time.

In the United States, cooling towers have been a frequent source of *Legionella* outbreaks. While there are currently no confirmed cultures from cooling towers in the vicinity of Glenwood, out of an abundance of caution, management at Regency Square Mall voluntarily turned theirs off. Dr. Landers stated, "We appreciate their cooperation during this public health outbreak."

Legionella pneumonia is not transmitted from person to person. People get *Legionella* pneumonia when they breathe in a mist or vapor containing the bacteria. Most healthy people exposed to the germ do not become sick. People at higher risk for illness are those 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. An example might be from breathing in droplets sprayed from a hot tub that has not been properly cleaned and disinfected.

For additional information, please contact your health care provider or local health department.

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