



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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No new cases of *Legionella* pneumonia reported

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dr. Karen Landers, Assistant State Health Officer for the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), said, "The general public in Florence, Ala., does not need to alter daily activities, including shopping, following a *Legionella* pneumonia outbreak. We have no new cases at this time and no new patients have been identified since Oct. 10."

ADPH continues to investigate the outbreak, and at this time all known cases have been associated with Glenwood Nursing Home facility.

Dr. Landers said, "Physicians and hospitals are monitoring the situation closely and are working to find any new cases of illness. Antibiotics prescribed by physicians to treat community acquired pneumonia are effective for *Legionella*, so no special antibiotics are needed."

Positive environmental cultures for *Legionella* bacteria were found from two cooling towers at Regency Square Mall and one cooling tower at Southwire. Testing continues to determine if there is a linkage between any cooling towers and the Glenwood Nursing Home outbreak.

Regency Square Mall and Southwire are cooperating with the health department, and out of precaution for the community, the cooling towers have been turned off. The owners are working with the health department to receive information on proper cleaning of the towers. Cooling towers on rooftops can dispense water droplets over some distance.

Mall spokesman James Hull said, "Regency Mall uses a third party contractor to provide preventative biocidal measures for its cooling towers and has cooperated fully with the Alabama Department of Public Health in its requests to sample the chiller water. On Thursday, Oct. 17, the mall voluntarily shut down and reesterilized its cooling towers before any test results were available and will complete retesting before the chillers are reactivated."

There are 14 patients with confirmed *Legionella* pneumonia. Ten patients are suspected to have had *Legionella* pneumonia, but test results on these patients have not been returned from the laboratory. One death from *Legionella* pneumonia is included in the 14 reported cases. The Glenwood Nursing Home 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.

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.

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

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