

TO: Nebraska Medical Professionals

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RE: Legionnaires' disease

DATE: August 10, 2011

The Office of Epidemiology at the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services has learned of two cases of Legionnaires' disease in persons who both reported having traveled to North Platte, Nebraska in the days prior to their illnesses. The first case was reported in a Nebraska Sarpy County resident who developed illness on July 11th. This patient had attended a meeting in the same motel where the second case, a Wyoming resident, reported staying for two nights at later dates (July 15th-16th). The investigation is ongoing to determine if these two persons shared other common exposures in North Platte other than having spent time in the same motel on different dates.

As part of this investigation, we are asking Nebraska physicians to be vigilant for cases of Legionnaires' disease (or legionellosis) among their patients and consider it as part of a differential diagnosis in patients with compatible signs and symptoms. Legionnaires' disease can have symptoms like many other forms of pneumonia, so it can be hard to diagnose at first. Signs of the disease can include: a high fever, chills, and a cough. Some people may also suffer from muscle aches and headaches. High risk groups include persons aged >50 years, smokers, immunosuppressed persons, or those with chronic conditions. A milder infection caused by the same type of *Legionella* bacteria is called Pontiac Fever. The symptoms of Pontiac Fever usually last for 2 to 5 days and may also include fever, headaches, and muscle aches; however, there is no pneumonia. Symptoms go away on their own often without treatment and ongoing problems.

We would be interested in learning of any patients that are currently or have previously (since July 1st) exhibited illness consistent with Legionnaires' disease or even Pontiac Fever if their symptoms developed 2 to 10 days after having been in or near North Platte, Nebraska. Please report suspect or confirmed cases to Public Health authorities using the contact information provided below.

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