

CUYAHOGA COUNTY
BOARD OF HEALTH
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LEGIONELLA UPDATE

August 10, 2018

We have received and reviewed the second set of environmental samples collected from Saint Columbkille Church in Parma. The samples were obtained on July 26, 2018 from various water sources in the church building including air handling units, a drinking fountain and hand sinks. There was no live legionella bacteria found in any of the collected samples.

The results did indicate the presence of non-viable (dead cells) legionella bacteria found in samples taken from the basement drinking fountain. Non-viable legionella can be found in a water sample as legionella occurs naturally in fresh water environments. It can become a health concern when it grows and spreads in building water systems.

Based on these results as well as environmental testing and epidemiologic findings, we have, following consultation with both the Ohio Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, provided recommendations to the administration at Saint Columbkille. Issues addressed include:

- Discontinuing use of the existing cooling tower as its present design, location, maintenance and operation pose a significant health risk
- Developing and implementing a comprehensive water management plan for all of the water sources at the parish facilities which complies with nationally-accepted standards and guidelines
- Engaging qualified experts in order to instigate best management practices related to the design, maintenance and operation of the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems located on the parish campus

LEGIONELLA UPDATE

August 1, 2018

We have received the results from the first round of environmental sampling conducted at St. Columbkille Church in Parma on July 23. This first set of samples was taken from the cooling tower reservoir, which is a component of the church building's cooling system. The results for this first set of samples have come back negative for the presence of legionella.

We are presently awaiting results for a second set of environmental samples taken on July 26. These samples were taken from various potable water sources inside the church building, such as water fountains and bathroom sinks and faucets. We anticipate receiving those results within the next week.

Our agency has been working closely with the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) throughout this investigation. As we receive additional information, we will be issuing a comprehensive list of recommendations to the church administration.

July 23, 2018

Afternoon update

Per our earlier update and interviews today, we have cast a wide net to identify potential additional cases in our Legionella investigation. As a result of widening our search, we now have identified four additional confirmed cases of Legionella that attended services at the Saint Columbkille Parish. This brings our current total case count to 11. Among these cases, there has been one fatality.

The age range for the 11 confirmed cases is from 74-93 years of age. The onset date of illness among cases is early June to mid-July of this year.

We remind the public of the risk factors associated with Legionella as listed by the Centers for Disease Control:

- Over 50 years old
- Former or current smoker
- Chronic lung disease, such as emphysema or COPD
- Immune system disorders due to disease or medication
- Other illness such as diabetes, kidney failure, or liver failure

We are continuing to reach out to those individual cases in order to collect as much relevant information as possible. Their cooperation, as well as that of church officials and the parish community, is greatly appreciated.

Updates will be provided as we learn more through our investigation.

July 23, 2018
Morning update

We have been able to confirm that a 93 year-old female from Parma had been diagnosed with Legionnaire's Disease earlier this summer and passed away on July 5, 2018. This case is one of several that we are currently investigating as part of a possible Legionella cluster.

We continue to work cooperatively with officials at Saint Columbkille, conducting environmental sampling and interviewing members of the church community. A reminder that the results of the environmental sampling may take up to ten business days to be known.

Please follow this link to the Center for Disease Control's Legionella page to learn more:
<https://www.cdc.gov/legionella/about/index.html>

July 22, 2018

We are presently working together with Saint Columbkille Parish in Parma in response to six confirmed cases of Legionella within the church's community. Environmental testing will be conducted on the premises of the church and results may take up to 10 days to be returned.

As a preventive measure, we recommended that the air conditioning units in the church be turned off until more information could be gathered and reviewed. Parishioners were notified of our recommendation in a statement issued by church officials.

We appreciate the community's patience as our investigation continues.

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<https://www.cdc.gov/legionella/about/index.html>