

VA North Texas Health Care System (VANTHCS) Results of Routine Water Testing for *Legionella* January 23, 2014 (FY14 QTR1 Testing)

Background

In August 2014, VHA implemented Directive 1061, "Prevention of HealthCare-Associated Legionella Disease and Scald Injury from Potable Water Distribution Systems." A component of this directive mandates all VA Health Care Systems conduct routine water testing for Legionella.

Legionella bacteria are found naturally in the environment and grow best in warm water such as that in cooling towers and large plumbing systems.

During a recent sampling of 205 water samples, seven water faucet samples from VA North Texas Health Care System facilities in Dallas and Bonham tested positive for Legionella bacterium.

The Findings

- Five faucets at the Bonham facility tested positive for Legionella pneumophila.
- One faucet at the Dallas-Fisher House media center tested positive for Legionella pneumophila.
- One faucet at the Dallas VA Medical Center, administrative office tested positive for Blue-White (non- pneumophila) Legionella. Blue-White (*non-pneumophila*) Legionella are rarely associated with human infection.

Remediation Steps

Upon receipt of the results, VA North Texas began immediate remediation steps including first deactivating the 7 specific areas identified as positive by removing them from service and eliminating any risk as a precaution. Additional efforts will be taken to thermal flush the impacted areas and hyper chlorination of the system in compliance with VHA Directive 1061. After these efforts are complete, we will repeat sampling the identified faucets and take additional samples from the same area for environmental validation of our process.

January 15, 2015 follow up testing results indicate no detection of Legionella bacterium at VA North Texas as described in the updates in blue below:

For Dallas:

The first positive result for the Dallas Campus was at the 8th Floor Medical Service Administration Office which had one positive result of Blue-White (*non- pneumophila*) Legionella. An important distinction between Blue-White (*non- pneumophila*) Legionella and Legionella pneumophila, is that Blue-White (*non-pneumophila*) Legionella are rarely associated with human infection. Additional water testing is being conducted for environmental validation in compliance with VHA Directive 1061.

- On December 22, 2014, water resampling results at the 8th floor indicate no detections. No further testing is required this quarter for this area.

The second positive result for the Dallas Campus was at the Fisher House, Media Center faucet for Legionella pneumophila. This faucet has been taken out of service, promptly remediated in accordance with VHA/CDC guidelines, and does not pose a health risk. Additional steps will be taken to include replacement of the faucet, thermal water flush and follow up water testing.

- On December 22, 2014, Fisher House samples indicate no detection inside the building. There are two positive results in the media center, the separate building

behind the Fisher House. These faucets have been taken out of service, promptly remediated in accordance with VHA/CDC guidelines and do not pose a health risk at this time. Next steps include replacement of the faucets, thermal water flush and then water resampling.

- **UPDATE:** On January 15, 2015, Fisher House Media Center samples (separate building behind the Fisher House) indicate no detection inside this building. No further testing is required this quarter for this area.

For Bonham: Bonham had five positive results as follows: three patient room faucets and one men's restroom faucet at the Community Living Center (CLC) tested positive for *Legionella pneumophila*. One men's restroom faucet at the Domiciliary tested positive for *Legionella pneumophila* as well. These faucets have been taken out of service, promptly remediated in accordance with VHA/CDC guidelines, and do not pose a health risk. Additional steps will be taken to include a thermal water flush, hyper chlorination flush, heightened clinical awareness and additional water testing.

- On December 22, 2014, water re-testing results at the Bonham CLC are as follows: 14 areas resampled; 2 positive results on B-wing. These two faucets have been taken out of service, promptly remediated in accordance with VHA/CDC guidelines and do not pose a health risk at this time. Next steps include replacement of the two faucets, thermal flush and then water resampling.
- **UPDATE:** On January 15, 2015, Bonham CLC samples indicate no detection inside this building. No further testing is required this quarter for this area.
- On December 22, 2014, water re-testing results at the Bonham Domiciliary are as follows: 3 areas resampled with no detection. No further testing is required this quarter for this area.

Moving Forward

VA North Texas will continue routine water testing quarterly to ensure proper monitoring. VA North Texas remains committed to delivering high quality care our Veterans have earned, and it is our priority to maintain a safe, healing environment for all who pass through our doors.