

## **Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit Concludes Investigation into Legionellosis Cluster in Orillia**

**Attention:** Physicians, Emergency Departments, Infection Control Practitioners, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Nurse Practitioners, NSM LHIN, Central LHIN

**Date:** November 19, 2019

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The investigation into a cluster of Legionellosis cases in Orillia which began October 3rd, 2019, has now concluded

Of the ten confirmed cases of Legionellosis associated with the cluster, one case expired in hospital. No new cases have been reported related to this cluster since early October.

While the bacteria is commonly found in natural, freshwater environments, it can become a health concern in human-made water systems (e.g., plumbing systems of large buildings, cooling towers, certain medical devices, decorative fountains) where conditions allow it to multiply and come in contact with vulnerable persons. People contract *Legionella* by inhaling aerosolized water droplets containing the bacteria or, less commonly, by aspiration of contaminated drinking water. Fortunately, most people exposed to the bacteria do not become ill.

The investigation determined that the strain of legionella found in the Rotary Place Arena cooling tower in Orillia was a close match to two cases of Legionellosis related to this cluster. The Rotary Place Arena cooling tower was fully disinfected after tests showed higher levels of legionella bacteria in late October. Follow-up tests of the cooling tower have come back unable to detect legionella.

If you have any questions, please contact the Infectious Diseases Team at 705-721-7520 ext. 8809.

