

LHD Template: Notification Letter to a Healthcare Facility Regarding a Presumptive Healthcare-Associated Case of Legionnaires' Disease

[Insert date]

Dear [Name of facility owner/manager and infection preventionist],

On [date], [LHD] received a report of a patient at [facility name] who meets the public health criteria for presumptive healthcare-associated Legionnaires' disease (LD), given that they were a [patient/resident] for 10 or more days during the 14 days before onset of symptoms. The identification of a presumptive healthcare-associated LD case raises concerns about potential ongoing *Legionella* transmission within your facility. To minimize any risk of continued transmission, the [LHD] and the New Jersey Department of Health recommend a full outbreak investigation, in collaboration with your facility's infection control, building maintenance, administration, and risk management teams.

Please provide your availability for a one-hour conference call within the next five business days. Additionally, complete the attached Facility Background Assessment Tool and return it at least 24 hours before the call. Include a copy of the facility's Water Management Program and any environmental *Legionella* test results from the past 12 months.

In the meantime, please take the following actions to identify any additional healthcare-associated cases of LD. Immediately notify the [LHD] if you discover other diagnoses among residents, staff, or visitors. We also recommend implementing immediate control measures to minimize the risk of *Legionella* exposure for building occupants. Further recommendations will follow upon receipt of the Facility Background Assessment Tool.

Case Surveillance

1. **Review facility laboratory records:** Include all clinical (human) *Legionella* testing and any positive results from the past 12 months.
2. **Perform a retrospective chart review:** Look at patient charts for the past 12 months to identify pneumonia cases that could have been healthcare-associated (\geq onset 48 hours after admission). If additional cases are identified, determine if the patients were tested for *Legionella*.
3. **Implement active clinical surveillance:**
 - Systematically identify patients with healthcare-associated pneumonia (onset \geq 48 hours after admission).
 - Ensure [Legionella-specific testing](#) is performed for each of these patients.
 - For patients referred to other hospitals for legionellosis symptoms, request appropriate *Legionella* testing at the receiving hospital.

Immediate Control Measures

1. **Do not provide tap water for drinking to residents/patients at risk of aspiration (i.e., swallowing difficulties),** including use of ice from the facility's ice machines in their beverages and tap water used in dilution/hydration of meals for residents/patients

on a soft diet. Provided bottled drinking water instead. Consider this recommendation for other susceptible residents/patients.¹

- a. Provide sterile water to hematopoietic stem cell or solid-organ transplant patients for tooth brushing, drinking, and flushing their feeding tubes. Use sterile water to flush their feeding tubes.^{1,2}
2. **Use only sterile (not distilled) water for filling reservoirs of devices used for nebulization** (e.g., CPAP/BiPAP machines, ventilators, oxygen concentrators, nebulizers). This guidance applies even in absence of an outbreak.^{1,2}
 - a. Use sterile water when rinsing is needed for nebulization devices and other semicritical respiratory-care equipment, including nebulizer masks and tubing, after they have been cleaned or disinfected.²

We appreciate your cooperation and look forward to working with you and your staff to ensure the safety and well-being of your [residents/patients]. If you have any questions, please contact [name and contact details for LHD]. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

[LHD POC name and contact details]

Citations

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). Control measures for *Legionella* in healthcare settings. Retrieved October 24, 2024, from <https://www.cdc.gov/investigate-legionella/php/healthcare-resources/control-measures.html>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). Guideline for preventing healthcare-associated pneumonia, 2003. Retrieved October 24, 2024, from <https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/media/pdfs/Guideline-Healthcare-AssociatedPneumonia-H.pdf>