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Wednesday, September 24, 2008

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Elmira Housing Authority To Continue Legionella Testing

Laura Hutchinson

September 23, 2008

ELMIRA-- After two deaths in Elmira, the Chemung county board of health met Tuesday night to discuss the fatal Legionnaires' disease outbreak.

They haven't met since the outbreak started at the Elmira Flannery Apartments.

The board was brought up to speed since the start of the outbreak last month.

The outbreak sickened 13 residents, and killed two.

The county's public health director tells us Legionnaires' disease is not uncommon in this area.

"We have Legionnaires' disease cases every year. They're usually an isolated one or two people. This is a rather large cluster for us so it was a great undertaking, both investigating it and communicating to the public and the people infected," said Bob Page, the Public Health Director.

The hot water tank at the apartments tested positive for the Legionella bacteria.

The Elmira Housing Authority superheated the water system to kill the bacteria, and has tested negative since.

The Housing Authority will continue sampling the water for the next three months, then start a quarterly routine next year.

As for the attorney representing the families affected by the disease, Christina Bruner-Sonsire's request to bring an expert of her own to the apartments was denied by a judge.

If she files a lawsuit, her Legionella expert will be allowed on the property.



