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Legionella bacteria found at Millcreek Township facility

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Officials at the Golden Living Center-Walnut Creek confirmed Saturday that Legionella bacteria has been found in the facility's water.

One resident at the Millcreek Township facility, 4850 Zuck Road, was recently diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease, said Leonard Quimby, the center's director of operations.

"Some of the plumbing and water outlets in the building have tested positive for Legionella bacteria, and we are taking appropriate and aggressive measures to address the presence of the Legionella organism in the plumbing," Quimby said in a phone interview.

Quimby said in a written statement that center officials knew "there was a possibility" of Legionnaires' disease about a week ago. The bacteria was confirmed Friday, he said.

Quimby said in the statement that the facility "acted quickly and proactively when we became aware of this situation. We immediately reviewed the health status of all of our residents and patients to determine if any were experiencing upper respiratory symptoms.

"As a result of this review, we have performed tests on 13 patients," he said in the statement. "Twelve of these tests came back negative for Legionnaires' Disease, and we are waiting for results on the remaining test. Four employees also were tested and all tests were negative."

Legionella can cause Legionnaires' disease, which leads to pneumonia and other respiratory ailments. The bacteria grows in water, including that found in systems such as cooling towers and condensers.

The \$17 million, 72,000-square-foot Golden LivingCenter facility provides rehabilitation and senior care services.

Officials said 92 residents live at the facility, which employs approximately 100 people.

"Patients, family members and employees were informed, as were all appropriate regulatory agencies," he said.

Quimby said no residents were evacuated.

Quimby said measures taken by the facility include a thermal disinfection of the water system and installation of a copper-silver ionization system recommended by Dr. Victor L. Yu, an expert on Legionnaires' disease, with whom center officials have consulted.

"Based on these actions, we anticipate that the water system will be free of the Legionella organism in about a week," Quimby said.

Quimby said all of the center's residents are being provided with bottled water.

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