

Swimming pool and spa at the Days Inn closed down

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OTTUMWA, Jun 16, 2010 (Ottumwa Courier - McClatchy-Tribune Information Services via COMTEX) --

A hotel pool and spa in Ottumwa were found to be potentially hazardous places to swim and closed until further notice.

Last week, the Iowa Department of Public Health found Legionella disease

in a hospitalized patient who claimed to have contracted the bacterial disease, which can cause pneumonia, during Memorial Day weekend at the Ottumwa Days Inn spa. The Ottumwa Health Department was made aware of the complaint on June 10.

Ottumwa inspectors immediately tested the facilities and found that both the pool and spa had not been disinfected.

"The chemical that keeps water safe and keeps bacteria from growing wasn't present. We don't know how long it wasn't present," said Ottumwa Health and Inspections Director Jody Gates.

Gates said that the pool met code when it was last inspected in March by the city. One of the requirements for the pool facilities is that they have a certified pool operator. That person is in charge of testing the chemicals and making sure the facilities meet the requirements of the city and state codes. The Days Inn did not have a certified pool operator, Gates said.

However, Gates noted, Legionella disease has not been confirmed to be present in the Ottumwa pools. They are awaiting test results that should be returned later this week.

"These rules are important because people can get sick if they are not complied," Gates said, adding that she's never had a complaint like this in her experience in the health department.

The city inspects the pools at least once a year.

"The person who owns the Days Inn also owns the Super 8. We inspected the Super 8 and the water quality was OK," Gates said, though the IDPH ordered the Super 8 pool and spa be closed since it is under the same ownership as the Days Inn.

The owner of the hotels found a certified pool operator for the Super 8 this week and the facilities there have been opened back up, Gates said.

Gates said that since there has only been one complaint of Legionella disease in the state, the IDPH is not conducting an investigation.

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