

Posted on Thu, May. 20, 2010

## Phila. case of Legionnaires' disease confirmed

By Josh Goldstein

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A woman working at the Social Security Administration at Third and Spring Garden Streets has been diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease, officials at the federal agency confirmed Wednesday. Another worker there has tested positive for legionella bacteria but has not developed the related pneumonia.

Officials from the federal agency and the Philadelphia Department of Public Health stressed that the single case was not an outbreak but rather an isolated occurrence.

The Social Security Administration has had the building's water and air-conditioning tested and found "no evidence" of legionella, said Terri Lewis, a regional spokeswoman. The water and air-conditioning systems are the most likely places to find the bacteria. About 1,500 people work in the building.

The series of tests were performed over Mother's Day weekend - May 7 through May 9.

"In an isolated case, we ask facilities to enhance surveillance through their occupational health unit," said Jeff Moran, a spokesman for the Philadelphia Department of Public Health.

Moran noted that the confirmed case of Legionnaires' involved someone who works in the city but resides in New Jersey.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there have been 538 cases, including 51 in Pennsylvania and none in New Jersey, so far this year. That compares with 557 cases in all of 2009 - of which 59 were in Pennsylvania and 23 in New Jersey.

Kathleen E. Squires, division director for infectious diseases at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia, said that the case did not signal an outbreak of Legionnaires' given the short incubation period for the disease and the number of people working at the site.

And, she noted, there are many good antibiotics available to treat the infection.

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