



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

RSA Tower 201 Monroe Street, Suite 914 Montgomery, AL 36104
Phone 334-206-5300 Fax 334-206-5520

www.adph.org

UAB Health Systems and ADPH issue joint *Legionella* statement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Jim Bakken
(205) 704-2834
Jim McVay, Dr.P.A.
(334) 206-5600

There has been significant confusion about the timeliness of reporting by UAB of the *Legionella* outbreak. In Alabama, reporting of communicable disease often follows multiple tracks, including both clinical and laboratory reports.

Lab test results were forwarded in a timely manner from UAB to ADPH between April 11 and May 19. Each identified positive *Legionella* result was investigated locally. Since *Legionella* is very prevalent in the environment, the identification of an outbreak from isolated laboratory reports is very difficult as in this instance.

The identification of a cluster of cases associated with an outbreak is more easily done through clinical reporting. It is for this reason that ADPH requires suspected outbreak reporting within 24 hours of identification. However, we recognize that an outbreak cannot be reported by the facility until it is identified. In a hospitalized population with multiple severe underlying health problems, the diagnosis of *Legionella* is often difficult to make.

UAB focused on protecting patients and reducing the risk of future cases. Based upon the information available at this time, it appears that there have been no further cases after the UAB interventions of May 7-9. We continue to work with UAB, CDC, and the Jefferson County Health Department.

Every outbreak presents an opportunity to improve the surveillance system. We will continue to work with laboratories, hospitals, physicians, and other reporting entities to enhance reporting and our ability to identify outbreaks.

-30-

5/29/14