

## **MNCLHD: Wauchope Hospital Legionella Bacterium Identification**

Dear Member,

The HSU has received correspondence from the Hastings Macleay Network notifying of a public health issue at Wauchope Hospital. The employer has informed the union that it has identified a Legionella bacterium in warm water testing at the site.

The HSU urges members to read this correspondence and encourages members to seek medical advice if you exhibit signs or symptoms as outlined in the attached correspondence.

In unity,



Gerard Hayes  
Secretary, HSU NSW/ACT/QLD



**CONFIDENTIAL**

18 December 2018

Mr Gerard Hayes  
Secretary  
Health Services Union NSW & ACT Branch  
Locked Bag 3  
AUSTRALIA SQUARE NSW 1215

Via Email: [secretary@hsu.asn.au](mailto:secretary@hsu.asn.au)

Dear Mr Hayes

I write to confirm the matter of the identification of a *Legionella* species in the warm water at Wauchope District Memorial Hospital.

As you may know, our Physical Resources Department undertakes routine testing of water samples throughout the Hastings Macleay Clinical Network. Recent testing at Wauchope District Memorial Hospital has identified a *Legionella* species from the warm water system of the old hospital building. It is important to note this is not the same *Legionella* that has been associated with the previous cases in Sydney, however, it is possible that this type of *Legionella* may cause illness.

Consultation occurred with the Infectious Diseases Physician, Senior Environmental Health Officer and CNC Infection Prevention and Control who advised the bacterium is carried via water droplets and transmission may occur if the water droplets are inhaled. A review of staffing was undertaken for the affected bathrooms, across the period in question. A determination was made that staff who assisted with patient showering may have potentially been exposed.

While the risk is very small, it is possible that this type of *Legionella* may cause illness. The usual incubation period is between two to 14 days and the symptoms may include cough, fever, shortness of breath, lethargy, generalised aches, pains and headaches.

Patients and staff were advised if they had experienced any of the above symptoms between 1 November to date and were concerned or remained unwell, to visit their GP with their letter so that appropriate investigations can be undertaken. Investigation for *Legionella* may require a blood test.

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Tel 02 5524 2100 Fax 02 5524 2103  
Website <http://mncld.health.nsw.gov.au/>



Please be advised that follow-up testing has occurred and that we are awaiting a definitive result. Relevant actions have been taken in accordance with the MNCLHD Health Care Facility Legionella Monitoring Response Protocol. In addition, processes are underway to advise patients, medical, nursing and support staff.

Wauchope District Memorial Hospital information sessions for all staff were held on Tuesday 11, Wednesday 12 and today Tuesday 18 December 2018. These were delivered as three sessions to ensure the majority of staff were able to attend. Details were provided directly to staff.

Patients and nursing staff were advised by letter dated 11 December 2018.

If you would like any further information, please contact me on telephone 5524 2100.

Yours sincerely

Jane Evans  
**General Manager Port Macquarie Base Hospital**  
**Coordinator Hastings Macleay Clinical Network**

*cc Michael Kearns*

*Delwyn Kruk*