



Cluster Of Elizabethkingia Cases Identified In Illinois

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 (<http://dph.illinois.gov/print/13041>)

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) announced today recent test results show 10 Illinois residents have been diagnosed with infections caused by a strain of *Elizabethkingia anophelis* that is different from the outbreak in Wisconsin.

Because of the *Elizabethkingia* outbreak in Wisconsin, IDPH sent alerts to Illinois hospitals and laboratories in early February and again in March requesting that they report all cases of *Elizabethkingia* going as far back as January 1, 2014. Additionally, IDPH requested that facilities save any remaining specimens for possible testing.

IDPH sent the specimens it received to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for testing, which resulted in the confirmation of these 10 cases. Six of those individuals have died; however, IDPH is unable to determine if *Elizabethkingia* was the cause of death because many of those individuals had underlying health conditions. As part of its testing, the CDC previously identified a case of *Elizabethkingia* that matches the strain in the Wisconsin outbreak. Earlier this month, IDPH reported that one case in Illinois related to the Wisconsin strain.

“Although this strain of *Elizabethkingia* is different than the one seen in the Wisconsin outbreak, our investigatory methods remain the same and we continue to work with the CDC and our local health departments to investigate this cluster of cases and develop ways to prevent additional infections,” said IDPH Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D.

Health officials continue to collect case histories and other information to try to find a connection among these individuals. Previously, health providers were not required to report individual cases of *Elizabethkingia*, so it is difficult to determine the degree and kind of exposure that results in illness. For the same reason, it is difficult to estimate how many cases of illness actually occur each year.

Elizabethkingia bacteria are commonly found in the environment, but do not typically cause human illness. The majority of the infections identified to date in Illinois have been bloodstream infections and in patients who are over age 65.

To help prevent illness due to various types of bacteria, implement good health practices, wash your hands frequently, and make sure your health care providers do the same.

More information about *Elizabethkingia* can be found on the [CDC website](#).