

LEGIONNAIRES' DISEASE STRIKES AGAIN IN MISSOURI

by Mark Pawlosky, *Missourian* staff writer

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The ninth case of Legionnaires' Disease in Missouri was reported Saturday by officials at the Memorial Community Hospital in Jefferson City.

Dr. Ralph Earp confirmed reports that a Dixon, MO, man contracted the disease a month ago. He is in the intensive-care unit at the hospital and is listed in critical condition.

The man is in his 60s and is a retired tavern owner, according to a police official in Dixon who said he knew the man. The man's family could not be reached to confirm identification and Dr. Earp would not release his name.

Dr. Earp said his suspicions that the man had contracted the disease were confirmed Tuesday by test results the hospital received from the Federal Center for Disease Control in Atlanta.

"I thought it was a possibility that he had Legionnaires' Disease. I treated him for it right away," the doctor said.

Although the patient has been listed in critical condition ever since he entered the hospital, Dr. Earp said there was little chance that anyone else has contracted the disease.

"The disease appears to be a sporadic case and not an epidemic. The incubation period for Legionnaires is two to 10 days. We would have expected some rumbling of an epidemic three weeks ago, if there was to be one," Dr. Earp said.

The dangerous illness was termed Legionnaires' Disease in 1976 when 29 persons died after contracting it at an American Legion Convention in Philadelphia. hundreds more became ill after the convention, but recovered.

The first symptoms of the disease are fever, coughing and congestion of the lungs. in cases resulting in death, the victims had developed a severe case of pneumonia and sometimes internal bleeding.

Although the information scientists have pertaining to

Legionnaires' Disease is limited, an official from the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta said Saturday the disease does not spread easily.

"We don't know a lot of things about it, but we do know that it is not highly contagious at all," said researcher Katherine Lord. "The disease has been isolated and found in water, and it is contracted by people drinking the same water. But there is no human-to-human spreading of the disease."

Missouri's last reported cases of the disease were in 1978, when a Jefferson City man and a man from St. Charles contracted it while attending a convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars last August in Dallas, Texas.

No deaths have resulted from the pneumonia- like disease in Missouri.



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nowhere; and sometimes
in the middle of nowhere,
you may find yourself.
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