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Your Health. Our Work.

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RE: *Legionella* Prevention Event

The Genesee County Health Department (GCHD) will be hosting an educational presentation for local building and facility managers to promote *Legionella* prevention in cooling towers. The event will be held on Friday, August 19, 2016 beginning at 9:00 AM, in the Harris Auditorium located on the third floor of the Genesee County Administration Building, 1101 Beach Street in downtown Flint.

NSF International, a global, independent, public health and safety organization, is developing NSF 453: *Cooling Towers – Treatment, Operation and Maintenance to Prevent Legionnaires' Disease*. The standard NSF 453 prescribes specific means and methods for managing the risk of Legionnaires' disease associated with cooling towers. Representatives from NSF International will provide an overview of building water health, including the threat of pathogens and both physical and chemical hazards. They will also describe an easy-to-follow, actionable plan for building and facility managers, offering technical support and training to participants.

Among other resources, a toolkit developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with input from GCHD and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services will be distributed at the event. The toolkit will aid building and facility managers in developing a water management program in accordance with ANSI/ASHRAE Standard 188-2015, helping them to identify areas in their buildings where *Legionella* might grow or spread and how to reduce that risk.

Floyd J. McCree Courts & Human Services Building ♦ 630 S. Saginaw Street, Ste. 4 ♦ Flint, Michigan 48502-1540
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Legionella is a type of bacteria commonly found in the environment that grows best in warm water, such as hot tubs, cooling towers, hot water tanks, drinkable water systems, and decorative fountains. When people are exposed to the bacteria, it can cause Legionnaires' disease, a serious type of pneumonia (lung infection).

Most healthy people do not get sick after being exposed to *Legionella* bacteria. Individuals at increased risk of becoming ill include those who are 50 years old or older; current or former smokers; individuals with chronic lung disease, such as emphysema or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; those who have a weakened immune system from diseases like cancer, diabetes, or kidney failure; or who are taking medicine that weakens their immune system. Legionnaires' disease in children is not common.

Any resident who develops pneumonia symptoms should see a doctor right away. Signs and symptoms of pneumonia can include cough, shortness of breath, muscle aches, headache, and high fever. Individuals should be sure to tell their doctor if they have used a hot tub, spent any nights away from home, or stayed in a hospital in the last two weeks. Legionnaires' disease requires treatment with antibiotics, and most patients can be treated successfully.

To RSVP for the August 19 event, email smoore@gchd.us or call 810-341-5239. For more information about Legionnaires' disease, visit the GCHD website at www.gchd.us.

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