



## PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE REPORT

### Essential Service #1. Monitor health status and understand health issues facing the community

#### Vaping



The State of Illinois has the dubious distinction of being the first state to report a death due to vaping. The number of cases reported to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) of people who have used e-cigarettes or vaped and have been hospitalized with respiratory symptoms has increased dramatically, including one case in Kane County. A total of 42 confirmed and probable cases have been reported in the state, ranging in age from 17-38 years. There are seven

cases in Kane County. These individuals have experienced respiratory illness after using e-cigarettes or vaping. Affected individuals have experienced respiratory symptoms including cough, shortness of breath, and fatigue. Some also experienced vomiting and diarrhea. Symptoms worsened over a period of days or weeks before admission to the hospital. IDPH is also working with the Kane County Health Department and other local health departments, other state health departments, and the Food and Drug Administration to investigate the names and types of e-cigarettes, vaping products, and devices, as well as where they were obtained. According to the CDC, in many cases, including Illinois, patients have acknowledged to health care personnel recent use of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)-containing products. However, no specific product has been identified in all cases, nor has any product been conclusively linked to illnesses. Even though cases appear similar, it is not clear if these cases have a common cause or if they are different diseases with similar symptoms.

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#### **Ten essential services of Public Health**

1. Monitor health status and understand health issues facing the community
2. Protect people from health problems and health hazards
3. Give people the information they need to make healthy choices
4. Engage the community to identify and solve health problems
5. Develop public health policies and plans
6. Enforce public health laws and regulations
7. Help people receive health services
8. Maintain a competent public health workforce
9. Evaluate and improve programs and interventions
10. Contribute to and apply the evidence base of public health

## Essential Service #1. Monitor health status and understand health issues facing the community

### Legionellosis

The Kane County Health Department received reports of several confirmed cases of Legionnaires' disease at Covenant Living at the Holmstad in Batavia in late August. The retirement community has notified residents, the residents' identified contact, and staff. "Public health officials are testing for Legionella bacteria and continue to investigate to identify potential sources and additional individuals who may have been exposed during this period," said Kane County Health Department Executive Director Barbara Jeffers. "Covenant Living is working closely with public health officials." Legionnaires' disease is a serious lung infection (pneumonia)



that people can get by breathing in small droplets of water containing Legionella bacteria. Outbreaks are most commonly associated with buildings or structures that have complex water systems, like hotels, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and cruise ships. The bacterium can become a health concern when it grows and spreads in human-made water systems, like hot tubs, cooling towers, hot water tanks, large plumbing systems, and decorative fountains. Most healthy people do not get Legionnaires' disease after being exposed to Legionella bacteria. People at increased risk of Legionnaire's disease are those 50 years of age or older, or those who have certain risk factors, such as being a current or former smoker, having a chronic disease, or having a weakened immune system. In 2018, Illinois reported 512 cases of Legionnaires' disease statewide with 251 confirmed to date in 2019.

## Essential Service #2: Protect people from health problems and health hazards

### Ticks

In August, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) issued a warning that ticks carrying the Heartland virus had been reported in Kankakee County, Illinois. In an effort to educate and protect residents from tick bites, the Kane County Health Department has a limited number of "Tick Kits" available for Kane County residents. These kits, packaged in a handy pocket-sized carrying case, contain a Tick ID Card, a First Aid Quick Facts Guide, antibacterial hand wipes, first aid and burn cream, a wipe to treat skin after the insect bite and a pair of plastic tweezers for removing the tick. The kits are available upon request at the Kane County Health Department offices in Aurora and at the Kane County Clerk's Department in Geneva. Staff is working to develop distribution partners in other areas of the county as well.

