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The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE): statement on the public health practice of public notification of complex infectious disease outbreaks, focus on *Legionella* outbreaks.

“Public health epidemiologists are charged with detecting, investigating and mitigating disease outbreaks in their jurisdictions and are aware that decisions on whether and when to notify the public of infectious disease outbreaks are complex. Currently, there is no national standard on the timing of public notification to prevent the spread of *Legionella*. Epidemiologists must instead rely on the facts of the specific outbreak situation, assess the risks and benefits of notification, and consider other factors when implementing actions to reduce harm, protect health, and save lives.

The most urgent priorities in managing *Legionella* outbreaks are identifying those who have been potentially exposed and providing them with guidance on how to avoid further exposure and when to seek care if symptoms consistent with *Legionella* develop, while mitigating the environmental sources of infection. When outbreaks are linked to healthcare facilities, these priorities require public health authorities to provide immediate guidance to the residents, staff, and visitors of the facility where the outbreak is occurring. Public health authorities typically work with facilities to (1) identify and notify anyone potentially exposed and at risk for illness and (2) implement potential remedial measures. Risk to the public at-large can be low or absent and the decision to issue public notification involves carefully considering the potential ramifications of acting on preliminary or incomplete information, which could lead to unnecessary and burdensome actions being taken and result in erosion of trust in the public health authority.

Decisions regarding public notification of *Legionella* outbreaks should be thoughtfully made by qualified, experienced public health professionals and should be informed by a solid understanding of the epidemiology of the disease and the unique characteristics of each individual outbreak setting. CSTE strongly asserts that public health officials should not be subjected to civil penalties or criminal charges for decisions made in good faith using available information and informed by sound public health science and practice.”