Princeton's Nassau Inn 'outbreak investigation' over Thanksgiving dinner illness climbs to 53 people



A file photo of The Nassau Inn (Martin Griff | The Times) *(Martin Griff/The Times)*

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PRINCETON — A total of 53 people with similar symptoms were considered in the Princeton health department's "outbreak investigation" at the Nassau Inn last week, health officer Jeffrey Grosser said Tuesday.

Health officials **launched an investigation at the Princeton hotel Dec. 1** after several people reported becoming ill after eating a Thanksgiving buffet there. Three reports were made this week, Grosser said.

"The numbers have pretty much plateaued and ended," he said.

When reached by telephone Tuesday, Nassau Inn employees directed media inquiries to the general manager, who was not immediately available for comment.

Though interviews were conducted with employees and food handling procedures were reviewed, it's difficult to determine exactly how the sicknesses spread, Grosser said.

"It would be almost impossible to pinpoint one particular practice because it is in and out of people's systems so quickly," he said.

Health officials urged staff to wash their hands, sanitize touchable surfaces of the restaurant and stay home if they felt ill. Some people at the Nassau Inn had symptoms of the common cold and "they weren't talking about GI illnesses," Grosser said.

Some people also complained that the food wasn't "piping hot," so health officials reviewed proper food handling techniques with employees, Grosser said.

Confirmed lab specimens have not been received from people reporting gastrointestinal illnesses, but Grosser suspects it's a norovirus, which causes inflammation of the stomach and intestines and is prevalent at this time of year, he said.

Most people reported feeling sick for 24 to 48 hours then feeling better, Grosser said.

The combination of precautions taken by health officials, in consultation with Nassau Inn employees, helped curb the spread of any sicknesses, he said.

"Unfortunately with norovirus, it can be brought on in a bunch of different ways — employees, patrons, food," Grosser said. "At this point, we know that whatever precautions were taken worked."

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SOURCE:

Http://www.nj.com/mercer/index.ssf/2014/12/53_people_complain_of_sickness_following_nassau_inn_visit_in_princeton.html