

One death linked to Norovirus outbreak

Posted: Tuesday, January 13, 2015 9:12 pm

One death linked to Norovirus outbreak 0 comments

JOSHUA VAIL

Tribune reporter

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment has received a report of a possible Norovirus-related death in its ongoing investigation of a Norovirus outbreak in the Neosho County area connected to Meals on Wheels in southeast Kansas.

KDHE Public Health Public Information Officer Aimee Rosenow said KDHE does not have an autopsy report confirming the cause of death as Norovirus infection and cannot release the name of the deceased.

"We do know that the patient was ill and has been served by this program," she said.

Rosenow said there have been more illnesses confirmed beyond the 29 ill reported Friday, but the KDHE is waiting to finish more interviews to release a new count. Interviews with those who may have been exposed is a major part of KDHE disease investigations. In this case, KDHE investigators must interview everyone who received a Jan. 6 Meals on Wheels delivery in Allen, Woodson and Neosho counties. Rosenow said the agency has finished about 60 percent of those interviews.

Interviews are part of the epidemiologic investigation, which will also include gathering clinical data on all patients and program staff who may have been sick with a case of Norovirus infection. The investigation will also include laboratory tests of food and stool samples and an environmental analysis, which in the case of this investigation included an inspection of the Chanute facility by the Kansas Department of Agriculture Food Safety Division Jan. 8.

Meals on Wheels is administered by Senior Services of SEK, which is based in Coffeyville, but the organization has facilities in several other counties including Neosho and Woodson counties where illnesses have been reported. Rosenow said KDHE is still trying to determine in which Senior Services of SEK facility the infection originated. Norovirus infections can be spread by food service workers who are or were sick until about 48 hours after recovery from symptoms. The Chanute facility is the only facility that has a food inspection report released by the KSDA since the investigation began. The Yates Center facility serving Woodson County is a satellite site with meal prep and dishwashing done at Chanute.

The final report on the outbreak investigation, when finished, will be released by the KDHE Bureau of Epidemiology and Public Health Informatics and will be available online at <http://www.kdheks.gov/epi/outbreaks.htm>.

Source: http://www.chanute.com/news/article_2f6f3c58-9b9b-11e4-a8bf-fbaad00300ed.html