

News Release



State of Wyoming
Department of Health
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For release: Immediately

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Subject: Outbreak Investigation Implicates Lodge Tap Water, At Least 250 May Have Developed Illness

CHEYENNE - An analysis of information collected from phone interviews of guests who stayed at the Big Horn Mountain Lodge or a neighboring lodge showed a statistically significant correlation between drinking tap water at the Big Horn Mountain Lodge and developing illness.

"From our phone interviews, it appears approximately 45% who stayed at the lodge and consumed tap water, later developed illness," said Dr. Alicia Anderson, epidemiologist, with the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention, who assisted with the investigation. "We estimate as many as 250 individuals may have developed illness in this outbreak, based on the number of people who visited the lodge since January 1, 2001."

At an interagency conference call on Friday, the Wyoming Department of Health, along with the Department's of Agriculture and Environmental Quality, agreed to keep the Cease and Desist Closure Order for the Big Horn Mountain Lodge in effect. Department of Agriculture officials expressed concern that the lodge is currently not licensed as a food establishment. In order to be licensed, the facility would need to have an approved water system, approved septic system, and an approved bar and restaurant facility.

Officials from the Department of Environmental Quality noted that no permits have been issued for the lodge's wells, water system and septic system, which is in violation of Wyoming Water Quality Rules and Regulations. DEQ officials requested the Cease and Desist Closure Order remain in effect until permits are applied for and issued.

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