



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Adriano Espaillat

## Members of the State Senate's Puerto Rican/Latino Caucus Call For Hospitals To Be Tested For Legionella Every Three Months

ADRIANO ESPAILLAT August 13, 2015



---

### *News from New York State Senator* **Adriano Espaillat**

**\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\***

## Members of the State Senate's Puerto Rican/Latino Caucus Call For Hospitals To Be Tested For Legionella Every Three Months

New York City -- Today members of the State Senate's Puerto Rican/Latino Caucus sent a letter to Governor Andrew Cuomo calling for the Legionnaires' disease regulations being drafted to include a provision requiring hospitals to comprehensively test their water systems for Legionella bacteria every three months.

Legionnaires' disease has devastating affects on the sick and people with pre-existing conditions, making outbreaks of the disease in hospitals very dangerous. We saw this in 2005, when seven people contracted the disease and two people died at NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia hospital, and with the contamination of Lincoln Medical Center in this outbreak.

State Senator Adriano Espaillat, Chair of the State Senate's Puerto Rican/Latino Caucus said "In my district in 2005 we saw the devastating affects of a Legionnaires' outbreak at a hospital and we are seeing it again now. Due to the extreme risk posed to the sick by Legionella bacteria, hospitals should be required to check their water systems frequently so we can prevent future outbreaks."

Doctor Rafael A. Lantigua said "Legionnaires' disease is especially dangerous to those with compromised immune systems, which is why we must go to great lengths to protect the water systems in hospitals. Comprehensively checking these systems four times a year is the best defense to protect patients from contracting Legionnaires' disease."

"Although none of us know how or why this disease has targeted the South Bronx, we need to take whatever measures we can to protect our community. And since we are now well-informed about Legionnaires Disease, we must utilize all of that information in the most responsible way possible. There's no going back," said Senator Rev Ruben Diaz.

"Following the recent outbreak of Legionnaires' disease in New York City and associated fatalities, it is important that we take all possible precautions to avoid another occurrence of the disease in the future," said State Senator Jose Peralta. "In developing a comprehensive legislative package to address the problem, ensuring the regular testing of hospital water systems is an essential aspect in prevention."

"The recent outbreak of Legionnaire's disease in the Bronx has shed a light on the preventive measures we must implement when faced with a public health crisis such as this. Hospitals are our first line of defense in caring for individuals, especially in vulnerable communities like the one I represent," said State Senator Gustavo Rivera. "It is crucial that our hospitals have the necessary resources to maintain the highest standards in hygiene and building safety. I join my colleagues of the Latino and Puerto Rican Senate Caucus in calling on the Governor to support the proposal for frequent testing and cleaning of water systems in hospitals and medical institutions."

"Exposure to Legionella bacteria is particularly dangerous whenever you have a high concentration of people who have underlying health conditions," said State Senator Jose M. Serrano. "Ensuring that our hospitals are regularly tested and kept to the highest safety standards is an important step towards protecting public health and preventing another outbreak."

"Our best defense against Legionella contamination is to be proactive and thorough, especially in our hospitals and care centers where those that are the most susceptible to infection are seeking care. Again we have witnessed the devastating effect of Legionnaires Disease. And while city and state officials moved quickly to identify the source, limit exposure and eradicate the contamination at multiple sites, sadly it was too late for some New Yorkers. With every Legionella outbreak this has been the status quo. It's evident we need to limit contamination before the spread of infection, especially in hospitals. Frequent testing and cleaning of these systems should become the new status quo," said Senator Martin Malavé Dilan.