

Business

Man sues New York hotel that was named as source of deadly Legionnaires' disease outbreak

By: The Associated Press

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NEW YORK, N.Y. - A man who came down with Legionnaires' disease and spent several days in a hospital has filed a civil lawsuit against the hotel identified by authorities as the source of the deadly outbreak.

Leslie Noble's lawsuit against the Opera House Hotel says its "negligence, carelessness and recklessness" caused him physical pain and mental anguish. The lawsuit by Noble, a 54-year-old security guard, was filed last week and seeks unspecified damages.

The disease is caused when water contaminated with a certain bacteria is inhaled into the lungs. It's especially dangerous for the elderly and for people with underlying health issues.

The city's health commissioner has said the Bronx hotel's rooftop air conditioning unit was the source of the outbreak, which sickened 128 people and killed 12.

Noble's attorney, Ronald Katter, said he is still recuperating from his illness, which had him hospitalized for five days, and it's unclear what kind of long-term effect it might have on his health.

"It's a form of pneumonia," Katter said. "That's a pretty significant lung condition that often has a permanent and residual effect."

The hotel co-operated fully to resolve the issue, and tests have come back clean, spokesman Michael McKeon said.

"Our tower was just two years old, has the most modern technology, and our maintenance plan was consistent with the new regulations the city and state are just now putting into place," McKeon said.

He added, "We expect that some lawyers will attempt to cash in on this unfortunate event, but we have lawyers to handle these matters, too."

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