

## Hepatitis C case found at 2nd Colorado hospital

July 25 2009, By P. SOLOMON BANDA , Associated Press Writer

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(AP) -- A patient infected with hepatitis C has been found at a second Colorado hospital that employed a surgery technician accused of swapping her dirty syringes for ones filled with painkillers meant for patients.

State [health officials](#) said Friday a patient at Audubon Surgery Center in Colorado Springs may have contracted the blood-borne [liver disease](#) from 26-year-old Kristen Diane Parker.

Prosecutors have already linked 19 hepatitis C cases found at Denver's Rose Medical Center to Parker. She faces multiple charges of tampering and fraudulently obtaining a controlled substance. Parker also worked at hospitals in Mount Kisco, N.Y., and Houston, where health officials have launched investigations.

"We're sorry to see any positive case come forward from Audubon," said state health department spokesman Mark Salley. "We kind of hoped that the employee would have changed her ways."

Justin Graf, one of Parker's attorneys, said they were working with the U.S. Attorney's Office and couldn't comment on the latest test results or a 42-count federal grand jury indictment handed up Thursday.

Parker faces up to life in prison if she is convicted of tampering and a person she infected dies, prosecutors said. More charges are possible.

Parker is accused of stealing the syringes from operating room carts, then replaced them with dirty ones filled with saline.

Parker's work at four hospitals in three states is now under scrutiny.

Officials say up to 6,000 [patients](#) at the two Colorado hospitals may have been exposed to the disease. Thousands of former patients have been tested, with 1,818 negative results from Rose and 894 from Audubon, Colorado health officials said Friday. Parker worked at Rose from Oct. 21 to April 13 and at Audubon from May 4 until June 29.

An additional 2,800 patients may have been exposed at Northern Westchester [Hospital](#) in Mount Kisco, N.Y., where Parker worked between October 2007 and February 2008. The hospital sent letters to patients advising them to get tested.

New York health department spokeswoman Claire Pospisil said Friday no cases linked to Parker have been found at Northern Westchester. Pospisil did not know how many people were tested. Hospital officials did not return messages.

Parker also worked at Christus St. John Hospital outside Houston between May 2005 and October 2006. County health officials there haven't determined whether patients may have been exposed to [hepatitis C](#) and need testing. Harris County (Texas) health department spokeswoman Rita Obey said they're reviewing records.

Christus St. John Hospital spokeswoman Christie Fortune said a review of their records doesn't reveal a reason to suspect patients were exposed. She would not elaborate.

Parker was being held without bond at Jefferson County's jail. Sheriff's spokesman Jim Shires would not comment about whether she had been

separated from other inmates because of her disease or if she's under suicide watch.

During a videotaped police interview June 30, Parker told a detective she didn't know she had hepatitis or that others would become infected.

"I don't care about myself anymore," she said, prompting the detective to ask her not to hurt herself. "Maybe it would just be easier if I just didn't have to deal with it. I want to be normal. I want help... I know I'm a good person."

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