

Hospital: Mold outbreak linked to infections since 2001

November 18 2019

Seattle Children's Hospital said Monday it believes a mold outbreak that has sickened seven patients, one fatally, since summer 2018 is linked to mold-related infections dating back nearly two decades.

Five children died from infections linked to *Aspergillus* mold in operating rooms at Children's from 2001 to 2014, and two others became ill, Dr. Jeff Sperring, the [hospital](#)'s chief executive, said in a written statement.

Those cases were thought at the time to be isolated, but officials now believe they and the more recent infections are all linked to inadequate air filtration, he said.

"Looking back, we should have recognized these connections sooner," Sperring said. "As CEO, I hold myself – and Seattle Children's – to a higher standard."

Sperring closed most operating rooms at Children's main campus after Nov. 10, when air tests detected *Aspergillus*, a common mold that can pose a severe danger to people with weakened immune systems or [lung disease](#).

He said they will remain closed through January as the hospital installs custom-built, high-efficiency particulate air—or HEPA—filters in each [operating room](#) and adjacent supply area. The hospital is also installing a new rooftop air handler, he said.

The operating rooms were also closed due to Aspergillus from May to early July of this year, and they have been tested for mold spores at least weekly since reopening.

Planned surgeries have been postponed or moved to other hospitals or to the Seattle Children's campus in Bellevue.

Sperring apologized for the persistent mold issues and the illnesses and deaths they had caused, calling it a "heartbreaking time for all of us at Seattle Children's" and acknowledging how devastating it had been for the families affected.

Last month, the parents of a teenage boy sued, saying he had contracted meningitis because of a mold-related [infection](#).

Sperring promised a rigorous review of the hospital's failings, including an examination of its culture, leadership and "how our teams communicate problems and escalate concerns."

"We will do everything in our power to get this right, and we will not stop until we do," he said.

© 2019 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Hospital: Mold outbreak linked to infections since 2001 (2019, November 18) retrieved 28 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-11-hospital-mold-outbreak-linked-infections.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.