



(December 8, 2015)

In order to further improve the lines of communication and to respond to the concerns between the National VA Council and you our members, I have established a National VA Council Briefing. This NVAC Briefing will bring you the latest news and developments within DVA and provide you with the current status of issues this Council is currently addressing. I believe that this NVAC Briefing will greatly enhance the way in which we communicate and the way in which we share new information, keeping you better informed.

Alma L. Lee
National VA Council, President

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**In This Briefing:** Pittsburgh VA relocates ICU patients after finding mold

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December 7, 2015 2:06 PM

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Keith Srakocic/Associated Press

The Pittsburgh VA did not say what type of mold was found in the heating and cooling unit.

By Sean D. Hamill / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Mold was found in a heating and cooling system during routine maintenance in an intensive care unit at the Veterans Affairs Pittsburgh Healthcare System's University Drive campus Saturday, the VA said today.

In a press release, the VA said no patients have been identified at the medical center as having any “active or recent hospital-associated illnesses due to mold.”

As a matter of routine, the VA had relocated the six patients’ staying in the ICU before the maintenance, and the unit will not be reopened “until all mold remediation is complete.”

All of the medical centers heating and cooling units were also inspected and “no other areas of concern have been identified,” the VA said.

The VA did not say what type of mold was found in the heating and cooling unit.

While mold is regularly found in the environment and typically does not cause illness, it can be potentially life-threatening to those with immuno-compromised systems, such as patients in ICUs.

Three transplant patients died, and a fourth patient was sickened, after being infected by mold at UPMC’s Presbyterian and Montefiore campus in Oakland — located less than half a mile from the VA medical center — over the last 14 months.

A federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention investigation into the mold outbreak at UPMC is still underway. A report is expected within weeks.

The Pittsburgh VA said if anyone has any questions related to the finding of mold at University Drive they can call the VA's local hotline at 412-360-1199.