

DHH NEWS



Alan Levine
Secretary

CONTACT

Olivia Watkins
(225)342-1463
Olivia.watkins@la.gov

Ken Pastorick
(225) 342-1881
ken.pastorick@la.gov

March 24, 2010

DHH Closes Oyster Harvesting Area in Plaquemines Parish and Recalls Oysters

BATON ROUGE—The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Wednesday closed a Plaquemines Parish molluscan shellfish harvesting area. DHH also ordered a recall of all oysters harvested from the area since March 6, including shucked, frozen, breaded and post-harvest processed oysters, and oysters for the half shell market.

Health Officer Dr. Jimmy Guidry signed the closure order when the Department was notified by the Mississippi State Department of Health that a Norovirus outbreak may have been caused by oysters harvested from Basin 4, Area 7. The closure takes effect at sundown Wednesday, March 24. Area 7 harvesting area is expected to be closed for at least 21 days.

Eleven people in Mississippi became ill with Norovirus after eating the Louisiana oysters at a seafood conference on March 10. One person was hospitalized, but was treated and released.

Norovirus is a virus that causes the “stomach flu.” Effects of the virus usually begin 24-48 hours after exposure. Symptoms, which last for one to two days on average, can include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and stomach cramping. Occasional symptoms may include low-grade fever, chills, headache, muscle aches and tiredness. Norovirus can be contracted several ways, including by eating food or drinking liquids contaminated by infected food handlers. Outbreaks have occurred from eating undercooked oysters harvested from contaminated waters--cooking kills the virus.

DHH has notified local oyster harvesters that work the affected areas, as well as the Louisiana Oyster Task Force.

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals strives to protect and promote health statewide and to ensure access to medical, preventive and rehabilitative services for all state citizens. To learn more about DHH, visit <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov>.

-end-