

For Immediate Release

July 14, 2021

KDHE, Sedgwick County Splash Park Investigation Update

(Sedgwick County, Kan.) – The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and the Sedgwick County Health Department (SCHD) continue to investigate cases of illness associated with Tanganyika Wildlife Park in Goddard, Kan., just west of Wichita.

One additional person who tested positive for *Shigella* bacteria has been identified, bringing the total cases linked to the park to seven. All seven cases visited the Splash Park on June 11, 2021. Investigations into other possible linked illnesses are ongoing.

DNA fingerprinting was performed on *Shigella* bacteria from two cases who reside in different counties, using a standardized laboratory and data analysis method called whole genome sequencing (WGS). WGS gives investigators detailed information about the bacteria causing illness. In this investigation, WGS showed that bacteria isolated from these two cases were closely related genetically. This means that they likely share a common source of infection. WGS testing could not be performed for the remaining five cases.

KDHE and SCHD have created a new survey for individuals who visited Tanganyika Wildlife Park from May 28 through June 19, 2021. This more detailed survey is designed to help investigators determine the cause of illness. It is important for us to get information from those who became ill as well as those that did not become ill. Please complete the new survey, even if you already completed a similar survey when the investigation was first announced. The new survey is at <https://tinyurl.com/kssplash>.

KDHE became aware of the first three *Shigella* cases' association with Tanganyika on June 18. The Splash Park has remained closed since June 19. Since then, Sedgwick County has worked with Tanganyika on improvements to processes which will meet the CDC's Model Aquatic Health Code (www.cdc.gov/mahc). This investigation remains ongoing and KDHE and SCHD will continue to provide updates to the public and patrons of the park.

Shigella is a bacteria spread from person-to-person through exposure to contaminated stool (feces). *Shigella* spreads easily; just a small number of bacteria can spread illness. Someone can become infected with *Shigella* through swallowing contaminated recreational water; touching items that are contaminated and touching the mouth; or caring for someone who has *Shigella*, including cleaning up after the person who uses the bathroom or when changing diapers.

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