

Food Poisoning Suspected in 3 Deaths, 40 Illnesses at Central State Hospital in Pineville, LA

Lawyer Richard J. Arsenault of Neblett, Beard & Arsenault in Louisiana says the estimated 5,000 U.S. deaths each year from foodborne illnesses "is just unacceptable when we are dealing with illnesses that are for the most part preventable."

Alexandria, LA ([PRWEB](#)) May 10, 2010 – Louisiana’s Department of Health and Hospitals and other regulatory agencies are investigating a possible [foodborne illness](#) outbreak, which left 40 sickened and three dead at Central State Hospital in Pineville, Louisiana.

“This is one of the potential hazards associated with institutional dining settings -- one tainted food handler or poisoned food item can contaminate a large number of people in a short amount of time,” said Attorney [Richard J. Arsenault](#), who will be speaking on foodborne illness outbreaks at the upcoming American Association for Justice convention in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Arsenault’s firm, the Alexandria-based [Neblett, Beard & Arsenault](#), has represented hundreds of foodborne illness victims throughout Louisiana and across the country. The firm has worked with many of the nation’s top food safety experts in some of the nation’s largest food poisoning outbreaks.

At Pineville’s Central State Hospital, patients and staff were sickened with “gastrointestinal symptoms” beginning on Friday, May 7 at 6:30 a.m. By Saturday morning, three victims were dead and several more hospitalized. Each of the victims reportedly ate chicken salad before developing symptoms.

“The health agencies are investigating what might have gone wrong at Central State. They will be testing ingredients of the chicken salad that was served at the facility and reportedly eaten by the victims prior to the onset of the illnesses,” said Arsenault.

Investigators believe that the outbreak was limited to an isolated incident at the hospital. Central State Hospital’s kitchen will remain cordoned while the investigation continues. Health agencies are also anticipating receiving the autopsy reports for the three victims and other laboratory results within a few days.

“According to CDC estimates, [foodborne illness](#) is responsible for over 5,000 deaths in America every year,” added Arsenault. “That number of victims is just unacceptable when we are dealing with illnesses that are for the most part preventable.”

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