Legionella Over Time

What is it?
- Legionnaires' disease is a severe form of pneumonia, most often caused by the bacterium Legionella pneumophila 1
- People who are at risk can become ill by breathing in small droplets of water that contain Legionella
- Legionella is found naturally in the environment, and can become a health concern when found in human-made water systems

Factors affecting the rise:
- Increase in diagnostic testing
- Environmental factors such as increased rain, drought, and warmer temperatures
- Potable water is the primary source of infection
- People who are older than fifty years, smokers, and immunocompromised individuals are at the highest risk for infection

Prevention:
- Facilities should determine if they are at an increased risk of growing and spreading Legionella
- Facilities at risk can develop and implement a Legionella water management program
- Providers should consider Legionella testing of at-risk individuals with severe pneumonia and report positive results to local public health quickly

Incidence of Legionellosis, 2000-2016, Montana & U.S.
Cases per 100,000 population

In the United States, the number of cases of Legionnaires' disease rose nearly 4.5X between 2000 and 2016, with 6,100 cases in 2016.

In Montana, the number of cases of Legionellosis increased 5X between 2000 and 2016, with 10 cases reported in 2016.