October 4, 2019

Dear Healthcare Providers,

During the week of October 7, the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission (Commission) will be issuing notices (attached) to all of its customers in Springfield and Ludlow regarding a Tier 2 violation of the maximum contaminant level (MCL) for haloacetic acids (HAA5). This exceedance is based on samples collected in September 2019. Below please find an update on the exceedance and how it might impact your organization.

October 2019 Update

- Sample results of our treated drinking water in June continued to indicate an exceedance of regulatory limits for haloacetic acids (HAA5).
- As before, this type of violation is not an immediate health hazard. The Commission and MassDEP advise that the water is safe to drink and use as normal. HAA5 is regulated based on the potential health impacts from drinking elevated levels over many years (i.e. a lifetime).
- Though HAA5 levels generally decreased this past quarter, we expect exceedances of the HAA5 MCL to persist into 2020. This is in part because the regulatory limit is a running annual average, and elevated results from late 2018 and 2019 will factor into future compliance calculations. The next round of sampling is in December.

Information Relevant to Healthcare Providers

Per MassDEP regulations, the Commission is including public notification letters in the bills of all retail customers in Springfield and Ludlow. Customers should begin receiving their bills the week of October 7. Water customers in Agawam, Longmeadow, and East Longmeadow – municipalities that purchase Commission water wholesale – also received similar notices from their municipalities.

Mandated language in the public notification for HAA5 includes the following:

“If you have a severely compromised immune system, have an infant, are pregnant, or are elderly, you may be at increased risk and should seek advice from your health care providers about drinking this water."

- Healthcare providers may receive questions from patients about this notice, and may wish to consult with MassDEP regarding scientific/technical resources about HAA5:
  - MassDEP Drinking Water Program Director: 617-292-5770, program.director-dwp@state.ma.us
  - https://www.mass.gov/service-details/haa5-in-drinking-water-information-for-consumers
Background

- HAA5 is formed when chlorine reacts with dissolved natural organic matter (NOM), which comes from runoff from the surrounding forest, found in surface water supplies such as Cobble Mountain Reservoir.
- The above-average rainfall in 2018 increased the levels of dissolved NOM in Cobble Mountain Reservoir by 50%, resulting in more reaction with chlorine and thus higher levels of HAA5.
- Levels of NOM in the reservoir are declining, but still remain elevated.
- Testing for HAA5 occurs quarterly. Customers must receive a notification each time there is an exceedance in any given quarter.

What is the Commission doing to resolve the problem?

- To address the HAA5 exceedance the Commission has adjusted its treatment processes to limit the formation of HAA5 as much as possible.
- In 2015 the Commission initiated a comprehensive planning process to upgrade the West Parish Filters Water Treatment Plant. The planning process is intended to result in plant upgrades that will ensure consistent water quality and regulatory compliance. This fall, the Commission began isolated pilot testing to evaluate new treatment process alternatives to address the HAA5 issue. This testing will determine the new treatment upgrades that will be constructed at the plant.