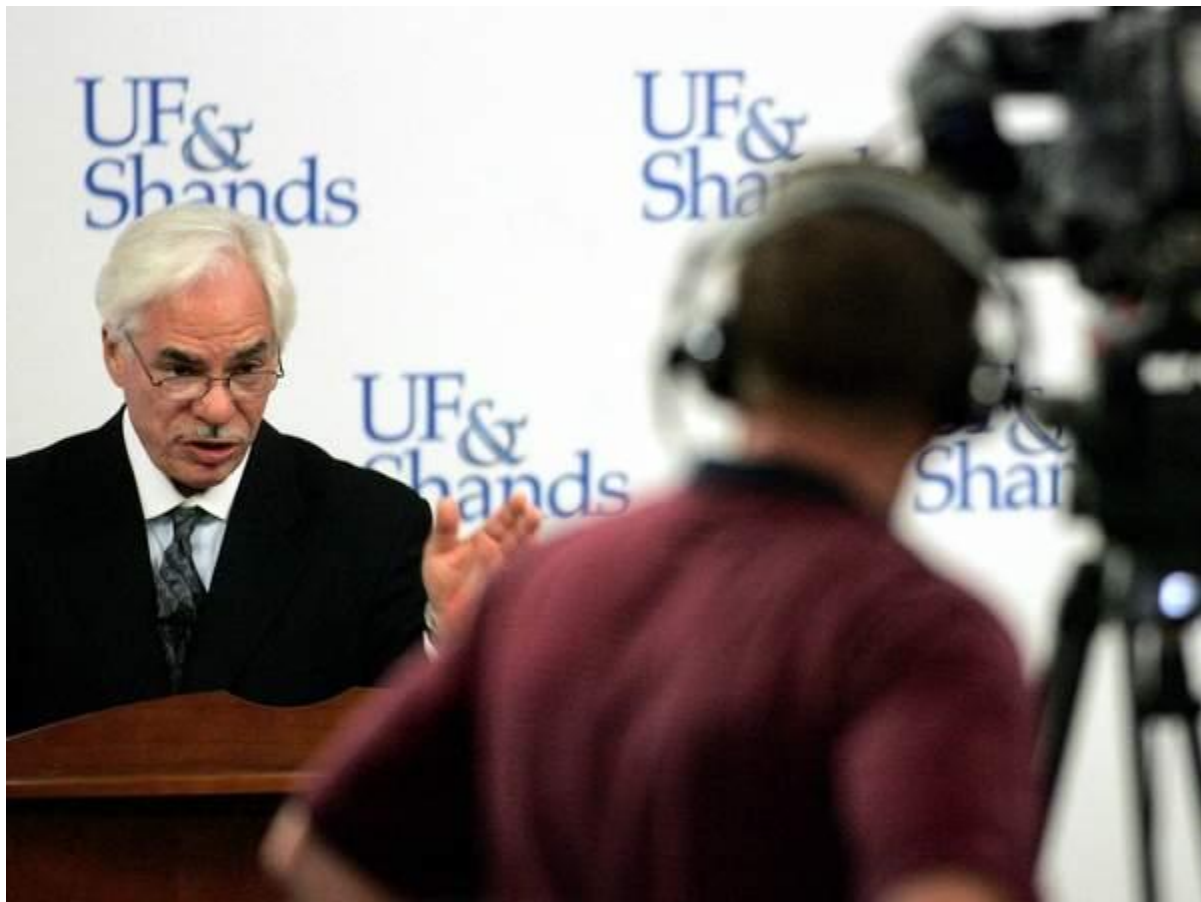


Officials say Shands patient died from Legionnaire's

Officials say they believe no other patients at the cancer hospital are at risk of being exposed.



Brad McClenny / The Gainesville Sun

In an effort to be more transparent to the public Timothy Goldfarb, Chief Executive Officer of Shands HealthCare, talks in a press conference at Shands Cancer Hospital at UF Wednesday afternoon about the discovery of Legionella bacteria, commonly found in the water, found at the Cancer Hospital when an unidentified patient tested positive for the bacteria Tuesday. The bacteria was also found in two sinks in the patients room.

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A Shands Cancer Hospital patient died from Legionnaire's disease after being exposed to the bacteria that cause the illness in his hospital room, officials confirmed Thursday.

Ryan Sigman, 56, of Archer died Saturday, but hospital officials said they didn't initially disclose his death because of privacy law and concern for his family. They said Thursday that they had completed cleaning the hospital's water system and believe no other patients risk being exposed to Legionella bacteria at the facility.

"We are very confident that this is a safe place for cancer patients and our other patients," said Dr. David Guzick, UF's senior vice president for health affairs and president of the Shands system.

Officials announced Wednesday that a patient had tested positive for the bacteria and it was found in water samples from two sinks in the patient's room. They said they did not disclose the death at that time out of respect for the patient's family, which had not authorized for his name to be released and was holding his memorial service Thursday.

"There was no intent to deceive," said Dr. Timothy Flynn, the University of Florida's interim senior associate dean for clinical affairs and chief medical officer for the hospital.

Flynn, who didn't identify the patient by name in discussing the case, said the death was caused because of an infection with the bacteria and an already compromised immune system. A member of Sigman's family reached at his Archer home Thursday declined comment.

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