



**DATE:** May 11, 2012

**TO:** All Local Health Departments  
Attn: Chief Food Inspection Officer

**FROM:** *DCG*  
A. Scott Gilliam, MBA, CP-FS  
Director, Food Protection Program

**SUBJECT:** Oyster Recall

**SUGGESTED ACTION:** Information provided in case of consumer inquiry.

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PUBLIC HEALTH

## DHH Recalls Oysters and Closes Oyster Harvesting Area

### 14 People Became ill After Eating Louisiana Oysters

Tuesday, May 8, 2012 | **Contact:** Bureau of Media & Communications (225) 342-7913

**BATON ROUGE**—The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) moved quickly Tuesday to close a Terrebonne Parish molluscan shellfish harvesting area located in Basin 12, Area 23. DHH also ordered a recall of all oysters harvested from that area since April 26, 2012 including shucked, frozen, breaded, post-harvest processed and oysters for the half shell market.

Fourteen people became ill with stomach viruses (norovirus) after eating the Louisiana oysters at a New Orleans area restaurant on April 28 or 29. The illnesses were not life-threatening, and no one was hospitalized. DHH epidemiologists and sanitarians traced the norovirus outbreak to Louisiana oysters consumed at the same restaurant. The oysters were harvested from Area 23.

Norovirus is a virus that causes the "stomach flu," or vomiting and diarrhea, in people. Norovirus usually begins 24 to 48 hours after exposure. Symptoms usually include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and stomach cramping. Sometimes people have a low-grade fever, chills, headache, muscle aches and a general sense of tiredness. The illness is usually brief, with symptoms lasting a day or two. People can get norovirus several ways, including eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated by infected food handlers. Cooking kills the virus, but outbreaks have occurred from eating undercooked oysters harvested from contaminated waters.

The closure order was signed today by Louisiana State Health Officer, Jimmy Guidry, M.D., and DHH Secretary Bruce D. Greenstein. The closure takes effect at sundown Tuesday, May 8, 2012. Area 23 harvesting area is expected to be closed for at least 21 days.

DHH has notified local oyster harvesters that work the affected area, as well as the Louisiana Oyster Task Force.

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals strives to protect and promote health statewide and to ensure access to medical, preventive and rehabilitative services for all state citizens. To learn more about DHH, visit <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov>. For up-to-date health information, news and emergency updates, follow DHH's [blog](#), [Twitter](#) account and [Facebook](#).