

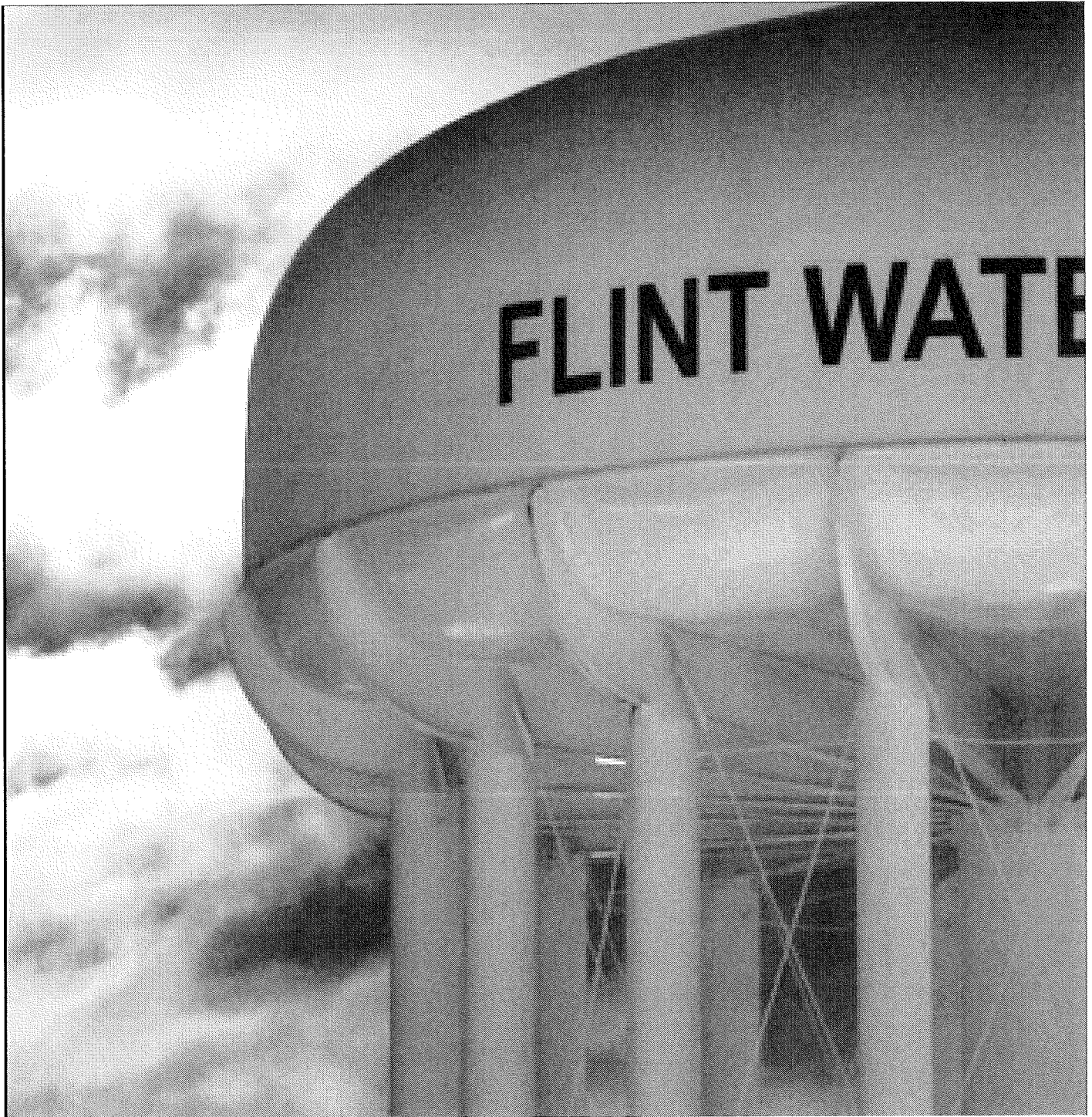
NEWS

•

•

•

**Michigan health director on
Flint crisis: 'Everyone has
to die of something'**



Copyright 2018 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Photo by: File photo

By: Max White

Posted at 1:32 PM, Jun 14, 2017

and last updated 2:24 PM, Jan 14, 2021

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Director is accused of saying "he can't save everyone," and "everyone has to die of something" in regard to the Legionnaires' disease outbreak in Genesee County.

Nick Lyon is charged with involuntary manslaughter and misconduct in office for his role in the crisis.

- [Member of Gov. Snyder's cabinet charged with manslaughter in Flint Water Crisis](#)
- [Meet the 15 people facing charges in the Flint Water Crisis](#)
- [Gov. Snyder standing behind officials charged in Flint water crisis](#)

According to Office of Special Counsel's investigator's report for Lyon, Lyon became aware of the Legionnaires' Disease outbreak on Jan. 28, 2015, but didn't inform the public until nearly a year later.

Recent Stories from wxyz.com

“Mr. Lyon failed in his responsibilities to protect the health and safety of the citizens of Flint,” Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette said at a press conference this morning.

"After allegedly being informed of the growing legionella situation in Flint, Nick Lyon failed to inform the public of this health threat," Schuette said. "A threat that cost the life of Robert Skidmore, (who) died in December 2015 of Legionnaire's disease"

The report states that Lyon met with Shawn McElmurry, an associate professor of civil engineering at Wayne State University, in the summer of 2016.

McElmurry was hired in January 2016 to put together the Flint Area Community and Environmental Partnership to research whether Flint's switch to the river water caused the Legionnaire's outbreak.

The meeting in the summer included McElmurry, Lyon, Dr .Paul Kilgore and Gov. Snyder's senior advisor. It was about the increased surveillance of the Legionnaires' Disease outbreak since they hadn't figured out the source of the outbreak.

According to the investigator's report, Lyon said they couldn't afford more surveillance. After Kilgore told Lyon that decision could cause more people to die, Lyon allegedly responded that he "couldn't save everyone," and "they have to die of something," the report said.

Snyder has come out in support of Lyon, as well as Dr. Eden Wells, who is also facing charges.

He released this statement:

Nick Lyon has been a strong leader at the Department of Health and Human Services for the past several years and remains completely committed to Flint's recovery. Director Lyon and Dr. Eden Wells, like every other person who has been charged with a crime by Bill Schuette, are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Some state employees were charged over a year ago and have been suspended from work since that time. They still have not had their day in court. That is not justice for Flint nor for those who have been charged. Director Lyon and Dr. Wells have been and continue to be

instrumental in Flint's recovery. They have my full faith and confidence, and will remain on duty at DHHS.

“The health crisis in Flint has created a trust crisis in Michigan government, exposing a serious lack of confidence in leaders to accept responsibility and solve problems,” Schuette said.