



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Health Department Reports Tuberculosis Case at Pittsburgh Public School
ACHD, District Working Together to Notify Affected Individuals and Offer Testing

PITTSBURGH – The Allegheny County Health Department today announced that a student attending South Hills 6-8 Middle School in the Pittsburgh Public Schools system has been diagnosed with Tuberculosis (TB). Because of confidentiality laws, the student will not be identified. The student is not currently attending school, but the Department and the District is proactively notifying faculty, staff, parents and all families of this health concern.

“Our main priority is to provide facts and testing as needed to keep the community safe and healthy. While tuberculosis is transmitted through the air, someone can only catch it by being in very close contact with a contagious individual for an extended amount of time,” said Dr. Karen A. Hacker, Director of the Health Department. “We are grateful for the cooperation and assistance of the Pittsburgh Public Schools administration, and the staff of South Hills 6-8, and have been glad to see their proactive response to this health issue.”

With the assistance of the student’s family and District staff, the Department has begun to identify individuals who have been exposed to the student and have already begun to contact those at risk. This afternoon, the Health Department and District staff met with the faculty and staff of Pittsburgh South Hills, as well as those at Pittsburgh Concord, and Pittsburgh Brashear High School. Letters are being sent home to parents and families of students of all three schools, inviting them to a meeting scheduled for tomorrow, Tuesday, February 10, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. in the Pittsburgh Brashear High School auditorium, 590 Crane Avenue, Pittsburgh. Health Department Director Dr. Hacker, District Superintendent Dr. Linda Lane, and staff will be on hand to answer questions. This meeting is not open to the general public, or media, but Dr. Hacker and Dr. Lane will be available for the press prior to and following the meeting.

While the risk of infecting others is minimal, the Health Department and District administration are recommending that all students of Pittsburgh South Hills 6-8 receive a TB screening test to determine if they have been exposed. The Health Department will be at the school on Tuesday, February 17, 2015 to conduct a free TB screening test, called TST. Blood is not required for this test. Screening will only be conducted with parent/guardian authorization; consent forms have been provided to parents/guardians. The Health Department will return to the school on Thursday, February 19, to check the results of tests.

Families also have the option of scheduling an appointment for their child to be tested free at the Health Department’s Tuberculosis Program location. To schedule an appointment, families can call 412-578-7901 or may visit the clinic located at 3901 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh. Parents/guardians may also choose to have their child tested by their own physician. If so, the Health Department is asking that the physician

report results to the Health Department by faxing the child's test results to 412-578-7905.

TB is a lung disease. Exposure does not mean infection, but in rare cases of infection, effective treatment with antibiotics is available. A positive TB screening test does not mean that the person has tuberculosis. A positive test only means that the person has been infected by the TB germ. Not everyone infected with the TB germ becomes sick. If the test is positive, further evaluation including a chest x-ray will be performed to rule out or diagnose TB. If a person has a positive skin or blood test, but is not sick with active TB, then he or she is not contagious. Symptoms of TB include weight loss, fever, night sweats and a cough that lasts longer than three weeks. Most people who are coughing during this time of year have a virus such as the common cold or the flu.

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