

For Immediate Release

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Allegheny County Health Department Alerts District of Confirmed Case of Tuberculosis

PITTSBURGH February 9, 2015 – The Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) has notified the Pittsburgh Public Schools that a confirmed case of tuberculosis (TB) has impacted a student of the Pittsburgh South Hills 6-8 school community. Because of confidentiality laws, the individual cannot be identified. Although the student is not currently at school, the District and Health Department is proactively notifying faculty, staff as well as parents and families of the case.

“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 TB by being in very close contact with a contagious individual for an extended amount of time,” said Dr. Karen 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, ACHD has begun identifying individuals who might have been exposed to this individual and will contact those at risk. This afternoon, ACHD and District staff met with the faculty and staff of Pittsburgh South Hills as well as Pittsburgh Concord and Pittsburgh Brashear High School.

Parents and families of students who attend all three schools have been invited to a parent meeting scheduled for tomorrow, Tuesday February 10th, at 5:30 p.m. in the Pittsburgh Brashear High School auditorium. Dr. Karen Hacker, District Superintendent Linda Lane and staff will be on hand to answer questions families may have. *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.*

“We are thankful for the Health Department’s guidance and support in addressing this health concern for our families,” said Superintendent Linda Lane. “We take the health and safety of our students as one of our top priorities and are committed informed throughout this process.”

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Page 2- Allegheny County Health Department Alerts District of Confirmed Case of Tuberculosis

Free TB Testing:

While the risk of infecting others is minimal, the ACHD and District administration recommends that all students of Pittsburgh South Hills receive a TB screening test to determine if they have been exposed. ACHD will be at Pittsburgh South Hills on Tuesday, February 17th to conduct a free TB screening test. The screening is a test called TST and does not require blood to be drawn. Screening will only be conducted with parent/guardian authorization.

A positive TST (TB Screening test) does not mean that a person has tuberculosis disease. A positive test only means that a 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 test but isn't sick with active TB, he or she isn't contagious. Symptoms of TB disease 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.

Additional information may be found on the District's website at www.pps.k12.pa.us/health.

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