



San Joaquin County Public Health Services

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San Joaquin County Public Health Services Commemorates World Tuberculosis (TB) Day

STOCKTON (March 24, 2017) – Today is World TB Day, a day set aside each year to recognize achievements in TB prevention and control, and renew our commitment to ending this devastating disease in our community.

Anyone can get TB. People with TB can be found in every state; in rural areas and cities; in workplaces and homes; and in many other places where people are in close contact.

TB is spread from person to person through the air when someone with active TB coughs and those around them become infected when they breathe in the bacteria. Some people will live with TB infection without ever developing active TB disease. Others will progress to active TB and continue the spread of TB. TB is curable, yet even with treatment, active TB can be deadly; in San Joaquin County, over 20% of people diagnosed with active TB in 2016 died.

“We can’t be complacent just because progression from infection to disease takes a little while,” says Dr. Julie Vaishampayan, Assistant Health Officer for San Joaquin County. “TB is an old persistent global plague. It’s important to remember that more than 2.4 billion people, about one third of the world’s people, are infected with TB.”

TB is preventable, yet too many people still suffer from this disease. It is estimated that there are more than 42,000 people in San Joaquin County who are infected, and at risk of progressing to active TB. That’s more than AT&T Park can hold for a Giants baseball game.

Last year San Joaquin County confirmed 42 cases of active TB, a decrease of 28% from 2015. This decrease was due in part to our efforts to find and treat people recently infected with TB, supporting them through their treatment which can take nine months, thereby preventing progression to active TB.

Expanding targeted testing and treatment of people with TB infection is key to eliminating active TB in our community. “People should know their TB status so that if they’re infected, they can be treated early, before they progress to the active form of TB,” said Dr. Vaishampayan. Without treatment, on average 5-10% of people with TB infection will progress to active TB. For some people, such as those with diabetes, that risk is much higher.

Clinicians, health care agencies, and community organizations, especially those serving people likely to have TB infection, have a critical role in TB elimination. Many people with TB infection who need to be reached do not traditionally receive care in health departments -- but are seen by private community providers and community health centers. Engaging these partners is critical to future success.

Working to eliminate TB is imperative to prevent more cases of TB within San Joaquin County and to improve the health of our community. To ensure that TB is truly eliminated in San

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Joaquin County, we can't be passive. World TB Day is the perfect opportunity to redouble our commitment and *Unite to End TB*.

For more information about World TB Day please visit the World Health Organization at <http://www.who.int/campaigns/tb-day/2017/en/> and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/worldtbdays/default.htm>. For more information about TB in San Joaquin County, please visit our website at http://www.sjcphs.org/Disease/documents/TB_Report_2016.pdf.

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