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Contact: István Fazekas  
Public Information Officer  
Phone: (209) 468-8584  
Email: [ifazekas@sjcphs.org](mailto:ifazekas@sjcphs.org)

**A Message from San Joaquin County Tuberculosis Controller Dr. Cristina Almeida and Public Health Health Officer Dr. Maggie Park:**

**San Joaquin County Public Health Confirms Increase in Tuberculosis (TB) Cases for 2023 and Encourages Increased Testing and Treatment of Acute and Latent TB Disease for World TB Day**

**Stockton, CA (March 22, 2024)** The state of California saw an increase of 15% in active TB cases from 2022 to 2023, with an even greater increase seen in San Joaquin County (55%) for the same time period, which represents the largest single year increase in 30 years. In light of this data and in honor of World Tuberculosis Day on March 24, San Joaquin County Public Health reiterates its commitment to combatting the rise of TB disease and providing community education, testing services, healthcare provider consultation, and active case management for the community. World TB Day was established in 1982 by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Union Against TB and Lung Disease (IUATLD) to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the discovery of the TB bacillus by Dr. Robert Koch on March 24, 1882.

**TB is a contagious disease** that is spread through the air, from person to person, when someone with active TB coughs and those around them become infected when they breathe in the bacteria. Those with active TB will have symptoms such as cough with or without bloody sputum, fever or night sweats, weight loss, and fatigue, and they can continue to spread the disease. Some people will live with TB infection without developing active TB symptoms (this is called latent TB), but 1 in 10 people with latent TB who are not treated will progress to active TB. This risk is even higher in people with immunocompromised conditions or certain chronic diseases.

**TB has significant adverse consequences**, as 50% of people with TB are hospitalized and 13% die with TB before or during treatment every year. According to Dr. Maggie Park, "State data shows that annually, approximately 200 people die with TB, which means someone dies with TB every other day in California."

**TB can be preventable.** Most (86%) of the new active TB cases each year arise from progression of untreated latent TB disease. This means most cases of new active TB are preventable through testing and treatment for latent TB. Over 2 million Californians have latent TB, and most are unaware of their infection or are untreated. "Early identification and treatment of people with latent TB can impact and hopefully reverse the rise of TB cases in the county," said Dr. Cristina Almeida.

## HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS:

- Evaluate your risk for TB: [Am I at Risk?](#)
- Ask your healthcare provider for testing if you feel you are at increased risk or have been exposed to someone with TB or have symptoms of TB
- If you are diagnosed with TB:
  - Follow the recommendations of your healthcare provider and local public health department to isolate yourself from others while you are still infectious.
  - Don't forget to keep following up with your healthcare provider and public health case managers to keep track of TB symptoms and response to medicine.
  - Whether you are being treated for acute or latent TB infection, complete all your medication as prescribed. Incomplete treatment can lead to TB bacterial resistance, return of symptoms, or even hospitalization and death.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

- **Assess for TB risk** in all patients (Adult and Pediatric tools in Resources below) and test for latent TB as recommended by the [US Preventive Services Task Force](#) (Grade B Recommendation).
- **Consider TB** as a diagnosis in patients with respiratory illness, especially in those with risk factors or prolonged illness (> 2 weeks) and refer promptly for treatment.
- **Report** all confirmed and suspected TB cases to the Tuberculosis Control Program at San Joaquin County Public Health Services (209) 468-3828 and consult for diagnosis, treatment and prevention as needed.
- Recognize the critical role of all providers, but particularly primary care providers, in the diagnosis and treatment of latent TB infection (LTBI) with widely accepted and recommended short treatment regimens of 3-4 months. Additional resources for providers are below.

## RESOURCES:

- Health Advisory: Substantial Increase in Tuberculosis in California: Recommendations for California Healthcare Providers (California Department of Public Health)  
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPA/Pages/CAHAN/Substantial-Increase-in-Tuberculosis-in-California-Recommendations-for-California-Healthcare-Providers.aspx>
- Tuberculosis in California: 2023 Snapshot <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/TB-in-California-2023-Snapshot.aspx>
- California Adult TB Risk Assessment  
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/CA-Adult-TB-Risk-Assessment.pdf>
- California Child TB Risk Assessment  
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/CA-Pediatric-TB-Risk-Assessment.pdf>
- Prevent Tuberculosis (TB) in 4 Steps: A Guide for Medical Providers.  
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/CA-TB-Prevent-TB-in-4-Steps.pdf>
- Preventing Tuberculosis in Your Clinical Setting: A Practical Guidebook. <https://ctca.org/wp-content/uploads/Preventing-TB-in-Your-Clinical-Setting-A-Practical-Guidebook.pdf>