

DATE:	September 28, 2016
TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Karen Murphy, PhD, RN, Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	Tuberculosis Reporting Requirements and Directly Observed Therapy as the Standard of Care
DISTRIBUTION:	Statewide
LOCATION:	Statewide
STREET ADDRESS:	Statewide
COUNTY:	Statewide
MUNICIPALITY:	Statewide
ZIP CODE:	Statewide

This transmission is a “Health Advisory”: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

HOSPITALS: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC, INFECTION CONTROL, NURSING, AND LABORATORY STAFF IN YOUR HOSPITAL

EMS COUNCILS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE

FQHCs: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE

LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP

The Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) is providing the following notice regarding:

- required reporting of suspected and confirmed cases of tuberculosis (TB) per Chapter 27 regulations; and,
- directly observed therapy (DOT) as the standard of care for treatment of active TB disease and playing a significant role in halting the development of drug resistant TB.

Reporting TB Disease

Health Care Practitioners and Facilities

Responsibilities:

28 Pa Code § 27.21a (b)(2) requires that tuberculosis, suspected or confirmed active disease (all sites) must be reported within five work days after being identified by symptoms, appearance or diagnosis. Reports may be submitted electronically via the PA National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (PA-NEDSS) or by calling the local state health center or county/municipal health department.

To access PA-NEDSS, click here: <https://www.nedss.state.pa.us/NEDSS/>.

For a listing of state health centers and county/municipal health departments, click here:

<http://www.health.pa.gov/Your-Department-of-Health/Offices%20and%20Bureaus/State%20Health%20Centers/Pages/default.aspx>

Laboratories

Responsibilities:

28 Pa Code § 27.22 requires that a person who is in charge of a clinical laboratory in which a laboratory test of a specimen derived from a human body yields results significant from a public health standpoint shall promptly report the findings, no later than the next work day after the close of business on the day on which the test was completed. This includes confirmation of positive smears or cultures and results of drug susceptibility testing.

Directly Observed Therapy – Standard of Care

Directly Observed Therapy (DOT) is a standard of care strategy recommended by the American Thoracic Society, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Infectious Diseases Society of America for ensuring that patients adhere to therapy for active TB disease.

DOT is the process in which a trained health care worker observes a patient ingest each dose of TB medication. DOT ensures that a patient successfully completes treatment. Incomplete treatment can lead to relapse and the development of drug resistance. Drug resistant TB can be deadly and is a growing problem across the nation that can result in hundreds of thousands of dollars in treatment costs and even death.

Private health care practitioners and facilities treating patients for active TB disease are to provide and document the administration of DOT. All case information including documentation of DOT must be made available to the department at the time of case reporting and throughout the course of treatment in order to comply with CDC reporting requirements. Practitioners and facilities that do not have the resources to provide and document DOT should refer patients to the department for medical care and case management.

The department asks all health care practitioners, facilities, and laboratories to assist in the elimination of TB by partnering with the department to identify and stop the transmission of TB. For more information, please call:

Pennsylvania Department of Health
Bureau of Communicable Diseases
Division of TB/STD
TB Program
(717) 787-6267
8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M

Web Link

Additional information about TB can be found online at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5211a1.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/newsroom/docs/factsheets/costly-burden-dr-tb-508.pdf>

<http://www.cdc.gov/tb/statistics/default.htm>

http://www.cdc.gov/tb/education/provider_edmaterials.htm

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action

This information is current as of September 28, 2016, but may be modified in the future. We will continue to post updated information regarding the most common questions about this subject.