



NEWS RELEASE

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Oklahoma County student diagnosed with active tuberculosis (TB)

The Oklahoma City-County Health Department (OCCHD) announced today that it is investigating a case of active tuberculosis (TB) in a student within the Western Heights Public School District. The student is not in the main student body of the school, however attends a small program with the District.

“The Western Heights School District administration and staff have taken all necessary precautions to protect their students and staff,” said Dr. Dale Claflin, TB Medical Director of OCCHD.

“As the student is not in the main student body of the school, we’re confident only a few students are impacted. OCCHD will continue to provide updates to the District as our investigation continues,” he added.

The program the student attends is sectioned off from the rest of the Western Heights population, therefore a small number of students and staff have been notified they will need testing. OCCHD officials have initiated an investigation including providing TB testing of household contacts and other close contacts to the student.

Targeted letters have been sent to school staff and to parents of students who may have had exposure and who OCCHD recommends be tested for possible TB infection. This includes persons who had frequent and/or prolonged indoor contact with the student (as would occur in specific classrooms).

Testing consists of a simple blood test (QuantiFERON) with a follow up test at a later date. If either test is found to be positive, a medical evaluation including a chest x-ray will be provided at no cost by OCCHD. If it is appropriate that preventive medication be prescribed, it will be provided at no cost by OCCHD. This medication lessens the risk that an individual with a positive test will develop active TB disease.

Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease caused by bacteria, which usually affects the lungs. However, other parts of the body can also be affected. Tuberculosis is spread when someone with TB disease of the lung coughs, sneezes, laughs or sings and TB germs get into the air. People who share the same air space with someone with TB may breathe in these germs.

General symptoms may include feeling weak or sick, weight loss, fever and night sweats. Persons with TB of the lung may have complaints of cough, chest pain and/or coughing up blood. Other symptoms depend on the particular part of the body that is affected.

Persons who have not been contacted by OCCHD do not need to be tested. However, if you are concerned or have additional questions, contact OCCHD at 405-215-2265. General information concerning tuberculosis can be found on the OCCHD website at www.occhd.org/TB.

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