



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Thursday, March 24, is World Tuberculosis Day

Public Health is Part of a Worldwide Effort to Eradicate TB

Champaign, IL – March 24 is World TB Day, an annual observance meant to draw attention to a disease that contributes to the deaths of more than 2 million people every year.

- One-third of the world's population is infected with TB
- Each year, 9 million people become sick with TB
- TB is the leading killer of people infected with HIV

Tuberculosis is a significant health concern in Champaign County. The disease has not been eradicated here, and students and others move to Champaign-Urbana from every part of the world. Without widespread TB testing and treatment, the disease could quickly spread.

The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District and the Champaign County Public Health Department are working to reduce the incidence of Tuberculosis in Champaign County. The Health District offers TB tests every week at its Urbana satellite office (217 N. Broadway), with follow-up tests and medical care for those with active TB. Nurses offer weekly TB tests in three local homeless shelters, and

provide TB tests to health care professionals. (Health providers should be screened every year for TB.) The County Public Health Department provides funds for TB services to residents of the county who live outside Champaign-Urbana.

Nurses in the Health District's Division of HIV/STD/TB Prevention & Management see a few active TB cases here every year. Without treatment, these individuals would spread the disease to dozens of others.

In 2004 Health District nurses performed 2,204 Tuberculosis tests. Of those, 80 tested positive. Follow-up tests found five people with active (contagious) TB, all of whom received direct observed therapy to curtail the infection and prevent transmission of the disease to others. (Two of those with active TB were from other counties.)

Left untreated, one person with active TB will infect 10 to 15 people PER YEAR!

Symptoms of pulmonary TB include excess phlegm and a persistent cough that lasts more than 3 weeks, chest pain and coughing blood. Other symptoms include fever, chills, night sweats, appetite loss, weight loss and fatigue.

According to the federal Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, TB is the 2nd leading killer of adults worldwide. In the U.S., Tuberculosis disproportionately affects minorities. More than 80 percent of TB cases in the U.S. occur in racial and ethnic minorities.

Only through the vigilance of health authorities everywhere can the disease be checked and – it is hoped – eliminated throughout the world.

Health District TB Clinics at 217 N. Broadway, Urbana:

Skin Tests: Mondays, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Test results are read the following Wednesday, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

For more information contact the Health District's Division of HIV/STD/TB Prevention & Management: (217) 239-7827.

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