



PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK

April 1 - 5, 2019

DAY 4: Pathways to Home Outreach for Tuberculosis Screening

Pathways to Home, 3804 Broadway Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90037

April 4, 8:30 am – 11 am

The Risks of Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease caused by a bacterium (germs) called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* that is spread person to person through tiny droplets released in the air when a person with the untreated, active form of TB coughs and sneezes. The bacteria usually attack the lungs, but TB bacteria can attack any part of the body. Anyone can be at risk for TB, but not everyone infected with the TB bacteria becomes sick; some people have latent TB infection, where the bacteria remains in an inactive state in the body and isn't contagious. The people most at risk for developing active TB disease are those who have latent TB infection.

Currently in Los Angeles County, we estimate that over 1 million residents have latent TB infection. People who are most at risk for TB infection are people who know or have lived with someone with active TB disease, have spent extended time in a country with high TB rates, are experiencing homelessness, or are living with HIV/AIDs or who are taking medications that suppress their immune system. In 2018, there were 520 confirmed TB cases in LA County, a 3.7% increase from 510 cases in 2017.

People experiencing homelessness are ten times more likely to develop TB disease because they often live in crowded living conditions, making the spread of TB more likely. They face challenges of substance abuse, mental health conditions, unemployment, health care access, and medical conditions such as diabetes, tobacco use, and HIV/AIDs, that increase the likelihood of developing active TB disease. The Department of Public Health (DPH) provides medical care and support to TB patients who are experiencing homelessness with food, shelter, transportation to medical appointments to assure that they can complete treatment for both TB disease and in some cases TB infection. These health equity measures enhance DPH's ability to achieve and even exceeded completion rates of TB treatment and

decreased mortality from TB for these patients. As a result, in 2018, the number of TB cases in patients experiencing homelessness was decreased by 50%, the lowest in past 3 years.

Protecting LA County from Tuberculosis

The best way to prevent the transmission of TB is to find and treat TB disease and latent TB infection.

The Department of Public Health (DPH) works with health care providers to assure they have current TB screening, testing, and treatment guidelines and protocols. DPH also provides consultations to assure that appropriate infection control measures are being taken to prevent the spread of disease. Data analysis support provided by the TBCP is used to determine if an outbreak is emerging. In addition, DPH delivers TB educational training to medical providers, nurses and community agencies who serve high-risk populations within LAC to increase awareness and knowledge of TB infection and TB disease.

Pathways to Home Project

Pathways to Home is the largest homeless shelter in Los Angeles and provides a diverse group of services. Pathway to Home Shelter is run by Volunteers of America, Los Angeles who are a non-profit human services organization committed to serving people in need, strengthening families, and building communities. This project is a collaboration with Volunteers of America, Los Angeles and the Department of Public Health to provide TB Screening services to the clients of Pathway to Home. The goal of this project is to prevent the transmission of tuberculosis within the homeless shelter by early detection and effective treatment of latent disease. DPH Clinic Services will provide ongoing outreach through its mobile unit to screen clients for TB and provide treatment as necessary.

For more information:

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/tb/index.htm>

