COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Public Health

BARBARA FERRER, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.Ed.
Director

MUNTU DAVIS, M.D., M.P.H.
County Health Officer

ANISH P. MAHAJAN, M.D., M.S., M.P.H.
Chief Deputy Director

RITA SINGHAL, M.D., M.P.H.
Director, Disease Control Bureau

JULIE M. HIGASHI, M.D., Ph.D.
Director, Tuberculosis Control Program
123 W. Manchester Blvd.
Inglewood, CA 90301
TEL (213) 745-0800 • FAX (213) 749-0926

www.publichealth.lacounty.gov

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Hilda L. Solis
First District

Holly J. Mitchell
Second District

Lindsey P. Horvath
Third District

Janice Hahn
Fourth District

Kathryn Barger
Fifth District

September 30, 2026

Dear Colleague,

We are writing to update you on tuberculosis (TB) clinical services at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) and how we will work with community physicians moving forward.

Over the past year, the County faced fiscal constraints that resulted in significant changes to our TB clinical services, including clinic closures and updated referral criteria. We recognize that these changes occurred quickly and created challenges for physicians who have long relied on Public Health for TB care. Thank you for your patience as we worked through these transitions. Since then, we have reorganized our clinical system into a unified TB Specialty Clinic with five locations and expanded our ability to accept referrals.

Referrals to DPH TB Specialty Clinic

We welcome referrals of patients with confirmed active TB disease and patients with a high clinical suspicion for TB who would benefit from our specialized outpatient care. We are no longer limiting referrals based on the prior clinical and social referral criteria and can consider all referrals for review. For insured patients, a payor authorization for TB care by Public Health will be needed to accept the referral.

Our TB Specialty Clinics offer services that can be difficult to provide in a general outpatient setting, including negative pressure facilities, sputum induction, onsite chest radiology, experienced TB physicians, directly observed therapy, specialized diagnostics, therapeutic drug

monitoring, dedicated specialty pharmacy, and close coordination with nurse case managers. These services improve outcomes for all patients and are particularly valuable for medically complex patients; patients with drug resistance, adherence concerns, treatment failure, or relapse; and others requiring intensive TB management. Please see our updated TB clinical services information here: http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/chs/phcenters.htm.

This does not mean that every patient with TB must transfer their clinical care to Public Health. Patients may remain with their referring physician or another in-network physician when they are comfortable managing TB, can provide timely monitoring and management of complications, and can meet Health Officer reporting and coordination requirements. Public Health physicians and nurses will continue to provide oversight in these situations. Please see our updated management requirements and treatment guidance.

Health Plan Authorization

Public Health receives limited federal support for core public health TB activities, such as surveillance and required reporting, but this funding does not cover clinical care, which health plans and their delegated medical groups are responsible for providing to their members.

For patients with health insurance, Public Health therefore must seek appropriate reimbursement for clinical care provided through our TB Specialty Clinic. We ask referring physicians to help us obtain authorization when it is required. This may include submitting a prior authorization request and documenting why TB Specialty Clinic care is medically necessary for the patient, including any clinical, adherence, or other factors that make specialty TB care important.

Our goal is to provide care for as many referred patients as possible. However, we have encountered situations in which health plans have not approved care at our TB Specialty Clinic, even when comparable TB services may not be readily available within the plan's network. If that occurs, we may not be able to accept the referral, and we will notify you and continue to support you with case management and oversight.

In urgent situations where delays pose a public health concern, we will coordinate timely care to protect patients and the public while an appropriate treatment arrangement is established.

Additional Support for Community Physicians

For questions related to a new TB report or initial management, physicians may contact the TB Control Program at (213) 745-0800.

Free TB CME is also available on the second Friday of February, April, June, August, October, and December. For information, please contact the TBCP at tbc@ph.lacounty.gov.

For TB infection (LTBI), we expect primary care and other community physicians to provide screening and treatment (resources here). We also encourage you to join the Southern California

Regional Community of Practice to End TB (CoP), a learning community that supports LTBI care. We continue to welcome LTBI referrals when treatment is not feasible, including medically complex cases or situations involving difficulty obtaining TB medications.

Our goal is to make it easier for physicians to refer, know what to expect after a referral, and understand how Public Health physicians can support ongoing TB care.

Thank you for your continued partnership in providing safe and effective TB care across Los Angeles County.

Sincerely,

Julie Higashi, MD PhD

Julie Higashi, MD, PhD

Director, Tuberculosis Control Program