

Proposed Recommendations Screening Workgroup / CTCA

Workgroup Goals:

Since April 2004, the CTCA Screening Workgroup has undertaken review of current tuberculosis screening requirements for California K-12 teachers, bus drivers, teachers' aides, and volunteers with the goals of assessing the effectiveness of current requirements and developing alternative recommendations, if appropriate.

Factors Considered:

- Joint recommendations by the American Thoracic Society and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding targeted tuberculin testing (CDC. Targeted tuberculin testing and treatment of latent tuberculosis infection. MMWR 2000; 49 (No. RR-6): 1-51.).
- Evidence from three models suggesting that current screening practices required for California K-12 teachers are not cost-effective.
- Absence of required teacher screening in multiple states, including Florida, Texas (since 1987), New Mexico, Nebraska, and North Dakota, many of which have large foreign-born populations.
- Legislative changes recently passed (Massachusetts) or introduced (Pennsylvania, South Dakota) with the goal of discontinuing required tuberculin skin test screening among selected low-risk groups, which are variably designated in state legislation to include volunteers, teachers, all school employees, and students.
- Clarifications of existing laws in Virginia and Tennessee, respectively, through collaborations involving each state's departments of public health and education. These clarifications resulted in decreases in tuberculin skin test screening among teachers, who were determined in each state to represent a group at low risk for tuberculosis.
- No known changes in epidemiology due to tuberculosis disease in teachers in states instituting the above measures.
- Limited availability of local expertise in California for supervision and conduct of teacher screening, due to demands associated with addressing groups (e.g., recently resettled Hmong refugees, persons with HIV infection) at higher risk for TB disease and infection.
- Factors associated with optimal public health resource allocation.
- Lack of a validated risk assessment tool appropriate for adult self-administration.
- Informal input from a representative of the California Teachers Association.
- Three sets of potential recommendations previously presented to the CTCA Executive Committee in September 2004.

Recommendations:

- Repeal of legislation* requiring that CA K-12 teachers, teachers' aides, bus drivers, and volunteers undergo and document pre-employment and four-year-interval screening for tuberculosis with intradermal tuberculin skin testing.
- Education of stakeholders, including parents, school employees, volunteers, local and state educational leaders, advocacy groups, and the general public, regarding the joint recommendations by the American Thoracic Society and the Centers for Disease Control and Preventions (CDC) pertaining to targeted tuberculin testing.
- Education of stakeholders, as noted above, regarding existing state law (Health and Safety Code Section 121364) that constitutes a public health safeguard and would allow local health officers to "order examinations for tuberculosis infection for the purposes of directing preventive measures" if, in the future, teachers, bus drivers, teachers' aides, and / or volunteers were determined to be "at heightened risk of tuberculosis exposure."

Workgroup Members:

Tony Paz and Robin Curtis (Co-chairs), Frank Alvarez (TB Controller, Santa Barbara Public Health Department), Charlotte Clunn (TB Controller, Imperial Public Health Department), Rupali Das (Public Health Medical Officer, Occupational Health Branch, CDHS), Travis Porco (Senior Epidemiologist, Tuberculosis Control Branch, CDHS), and Samuel Sanders (TB Controller, Sutter Human Services Agency).

* Legislation including but not limited to:

- Education Code: Division 4, Part 27, Chapter 9, Section 49406
- Health and Safety Code: Sections 121530, 121525, 121535, 121555

This recommendation was presented to CTCA Executive Committee March 14, 2005 and was approved.