



Susan D. Harrington, M.S., R.D.
Director

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Released by: Florence Neglia, Director
Health Promotion and
Professional Development
(951) 358-7131

Contact: Barbara Cole, RN, PHN, MSN
Director – Disease Control
(951) 358-5107

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Health Officials Investigate Tuberculosis Exposure at a Local High School

A student at North High school has been diagnosed with active tuberculosis (TB). The student, who has not been at school since the second week of September, is being treated and is expected to make a full recovery.

This is the first case of TB involving a school setting identified in Riverside County this year. Fifty-five (55) TB cases have been reported countywide thus far in 2008; 80 cases were reported in 2007.

The Department of Public Health is working closely with school officials to identify students and staff who were in close and prolonged contact with the student. Individuals on campus that have been identified as having possible exposure are receiving a letter today from Public Health to recommend screening for TB infection.

“TB testing is being recommended as a precautionary measure although the risk of transmission is very low. It is better to err on the side of caution,” said Dr. Eric Frykman, the county public health officer.

Tuberculosis is a disease that is spread by close prolonged contact with an individual who has active tuberculosis. People can become infected with TB by breathing air exhaled by someone who is sick with TB. Not everyone infected with TB bacteria becomes sick. A person with inactive (latent) TB cannot spread the TB bacteria to others.

Anyone concerned about TB can contact their health care provider or Public Health at (951) 358-5107. For additional information about tuberculosis visit the Department of Public Health website www.rivco-diseasecontrol.org.