



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

VIRGINIA PRESSLER, M.D.
DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 3, 2017

Department of Health and Department of Education notify students, parents and staff of possible TB exposure at Waipahu High School *Evaluation and screening to be offered on campus*

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) and Department of Education are notifying students, parents, and staff members of Waipahu High School of possible exposure to tuberculosis (TB) at the school. Most students and staff are not at risk and precautionary TB testing will be offered to roughly 135 individuals who may have had exposure to a person with active TB.

DOH conducted an extensive investigation and evaluation of potential contacts and possible exposure immediately after being notified of the active TB case in March. Information on the individual and their case is confidential and protected by law. DOH will be testing only those persons with regular close contact to the patient, and all student families and school employees are receiving a letter describing the situation and whether testing is recommended.

School-based meetings are being scheduled to give families and employees the opportunity to ask questions and discuss their concerns. TB screening at the school is scheduled to begin on Friday, April 7.

“This screening is an extra measure of safety for students, school staff, their families and the community,” said Health Director Dr. Virginia Pressler, “Our TB Control staff are experts in this area and are working closely with school officials to ensure everyone’s safety and answer all questions and concerns.”

TB is a disease that is commonly seen in the lungs and can be spread from person-to-person through the air with close, continuous contact. When a person with active TB disease in the lung

or throat coughs, sneezes, speaks, or sings, tiny drops containing *M. tuberculosis* may be spread into the air. If another person inhales these drops there is a chance that they may become infected with TB. Two forms of TB exist, both of which are treatable and curable:

1. Latent TB infection – when a person has TB bacteria in their body but the body's immune system is protecting them and they are not sick. Someone with latent TB infection cannot spread the infection to other people.
2. Active TB disease – when a person becomes sick with TB because their immune system can no longer protect them. Someone with active TB disease may be able to spread the disease to other people.

For more information on tuberculosis, please call the State of Hawaii Tuberculosis Control Program at 832-5731 or visit the Department of Health website at www.hawaii.gov/health/tb.

#