



## World TB Day – March 24 TB ELIMINATION: TOGETHER WE CAN!



This annual event commemorates the date in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch announced his discovery of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the bacteria that cause tuberculosis (TB). World TB Day presents an occasion to raise awareness around the world – including in our own community – about the health

threat of TB and to highlight the importance of community collaboration, which is essential for the elimination of this ancient disease.

We can reach the goal of TB elimination by working together and strengthening partnerships. This country's progress in controlling TB will only be sustainable if local, state, national, and international partners from all sectors of our society join resources and collaborate. Our united effort is needed to reach those at highest risk for TB, and to identify and implement innovative strategies to improve testing and treatment among high-risk populations.<sup>1</sup>

The Washoe County Health District Tuberculosis Prevention and Control Program wishes to express gratitude to our community partners for their collaborative efforts. Providers protect the community when they promptly identify and treat persons with tuberculosis disease and persons with latent TB who have an increased risk of developing TB disease.

### New diagnostic methods and screening options improve TB control

***Mycobacterium Tuberculosis Direct (MTD)*** Improved diagnostics have been implemented at the Nevada State Public Health Lab. The *Mycobacterium Tuberculosis Direct (MTD)* test is now available for select specimens. The MTD test is a nucleic acid amplification test for the detection of *M. tuberculosis* in both smear-positive and smear-negative clinical specimens. It is currently only approved for pulmonary specimens. The MTD test is presently the most rapid technique for diagnosing tuberculosis as the results are usually available the same day the test is performed. A positive MTD result indicates a high likelihood of TB however; a negative result does not exclude a TB diagnosis. Therefore results from the MTD test must be interpreted in the context of the patient's signs and symptoms as well as the prevalence of TB within the community.

The MTD test is intended for use with specimens from patients that are showing signs and symptoms consistent with active pulmonary tuberculosis. The test is used in addition to acid fast bacillus (AFB) smear and culture. It is still important to perform culture due to the need for drug susceptibility information on isolates of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.

***QuantIFERON TB-Gold In-Tube (QFT-GIT)*** Additional providers are offering QuantIFERON TB-Gold In-Tube. QFT-GIT is a blood assay for *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. It is more specific than the TST (tuberculin skin test) and requires one visit rather than the two required for a TST. QFT-GIT measures immune response to peptides that stimulate *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* proteins not found in the BCG vaccine or in most atypical *Mycobacteria*. QFT is now offered by Lab Corp, Concentra and Saint Mary's Regional Medical Center. Contact them directly for details.

***Tuberculin skin tests (TST)*** are now available seven days week at Saint Mary's "The Clinic at WalMart". Call 770-7664 for times.

Physicians and other health care providers are entrusting the care of their patients with TB disease to the TB clinic. Each person with TB disease is assigned a case manager. The case manager ensures treatment is complete and effective by monitoring patients for harmful side effects and encouraging and supporting each patient through the lengthy course of treatment.

Amendments to Chapter 441A of NAC (Nevada Administrative Code) went into effect January 2011. **Section 31 of NAC 441A now requires pharmacists to report to the health authority any person who has been prescribed two or more of the first line drugs used to treat active tuberculosis (Isoniazid, Ethambutol, Pyrazinamide, any rifamycin group drugs, and/or Streptomycin).** Please refer to the [Washoe County Health District Communicable Disease reporting form](#) at the District Health Department's website at <http://www.washoecounty.us/health/cchs/tbsp.html>.

Nationally and globally, there are several new drugs and a vaccine that have entered phase II clinical trials that offer cautious optimistic promise of additional means to put an end to this ancient scourge.



<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 1600 Clifton Rd. Atlanta, GA 30333, USA. 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) TTY: (888) 232-6348, 24 Hours/Every Day - [cdcinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:cdcinfo@cdc.gov)