



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Public Health Calls Attention to World Tuberculosis Day

SACRAMENTO – California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Director and State Public Health Officer Dr. Karen Smith today is inviting people in California to observe World Tuberculosis (TB) Day. On this day, events are being held around the world to raise awareness about TB on the anniversary of the 1882 discovery of the organism *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the cause of TB.

“Each year more than 2,000 people in California will develop tuberculosis and more than 200 of them will die from of it,” Dr. Smith said. “An estimated 2.4 million people in California are infected with tuberculosis and don’t even know it. People at risk need to be tested – and if they are infected, they need to get treatment.”

TB disease and death can be prevented if TB infection is found and treated during a silent infection period known as latent TB infection. People with latent TB infection will feel well long after they are infected and will not be aware of their infection unless tested. If not treated, they can become ill and spread TB to family, friends, and coworkers without knowing it.

This year, CDPH is working with local public health departments, health care providers and community-based agencies to intensify efforts to find and treat latent TB infection before it causes disease. The [U.S. Preventive Services Task Force](#) has recently issued draft national recommendations for testing people at risk for TB.

CDPH is recommending clinical providers use a [new risk assessment tool](#) to identify individuals at risk who will benefit from testing and treatment. CDPH recommends testing those who were born in or lived in a country with high TB rates, those who have had known contact with someone ill with infectious TB, and people with weakened immune systems.

CDPH’s [Tuberculosis Control Branch web site](#) has additional information about TB. More information about World TB Day can be found on the [World Health Organization](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) websites

www.cdph.ca.gov

