



NEWS RELEASE

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Know, Act, Treat - Eliminate Tuberculosis!

March 24 is World TB Day

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Bruce Rauner has issued a proclamation declaring that Illinois will observe World TB Day, on March 24, 2015. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) observes this day annually to encourage Illinoisans to learn about TB and to help stop the spread of the disease. Illinois ranks sixth in the nation for the highest number of TB cases.

“Although the number of cases in the US and IL continues to decrease, the complexity of cases has actually increased because of socioeconomic issues and increasing drug resistance,” said Illinois Department of Public Health Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. “IDPH is working to promote prompt diagnosis and treatment of TB cases, to implement strategies to prevent TB in children, and to decrease TB transmission in health care facilities and community settings.”

Tuberculosis is a contagious and potentially life-threatening disease that is transmitted when a person with active TB coughs or sneezes. People with TB are most likely to spread the bacteria to other individuals with whom they have regular contact.

In 2014, 320 cases of active TB were reported in Illinois, a decrease from 327 cases reported in 2013. The continued decrease can largely be attributed to Directly Observed Therapy (DOT), a program created to make sure those with TB complete their full medication regimen.

A recent study conducted by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that direct costs for treatment can range from \$17,000 to more than \$500,000 per case. The variability is based on whether patients have complications around drug resistance and also incorporates productivity losses that occur while patients are completing medical treatment for TB.

Efforts to end TB include developing new treatments, increasing the capacity of medical professionals to provide treatment, increasing the capacity of public health professionals to conduct outreach and identify individuals who have been exposed to TB. Other critical aspects of TB elimination include improving access to medical care and clinical services for indigent populations that are at higher risk for developing TB, as well as issuing new recommendations for improved testing for U.S. immigrants. The elimination of TB cannot occur without mobilizing support and engaging in global prevention.

To learn more about how tuberculosis is spread, symptoms, and how to treat it, visit <http://1.usa.gov/1E6oif2>. For further information regarding TB information or TB skin testing, please contact the Iroquois County Public Health Department at 815-432-2483.