

TUBERCULOSIS (TB) SCREENING GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

As Of July 30, 2004 , transmission-free certification for tuberculosis (TB) is no longer a state-mandated requirement for employment in health facilities, schools and day-care centers. Therefore, TB skin testing of new employees is, in general, no longer required for new employees in schools and pre-schools.

As a result of a public hearing on June 28, 2004 and prior research, New Mexico Administrative Code 7.4.4 (Control of Communicable Disease in Health Facility Personnel) has been repealed. This code required persons employed or who were seeking employment or who volunteered in health facilities, schools and day care centers to be tested and maintain certification that they were free from TB in a transmissible form.

New Mexico has been a low incidence state for TB since 2000, which means that there are fewer than 3.5 TB cases per 100,000 persons. In the early 1990s the American Thoracic Society, in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, encouraged tuberculin skin testing only of individuals at high-risk for TB and discouraged all mandated and mass pre-employment screenings. State TB programs were encouraged to take the lead in determining which groups should be screened based on local TB data. Screening low-risk individuals often results in false positive tests and subsequent unnecessary treatment, diverting financial and human resources from other priority activities.

GUIDELINES

- Tuberculin skin testing for employment in schools and daycare centers of low-risk individuals is not required in New Mexico.
- The NM Department of Health will offer screening the following high-risk individuals.
 - Close contacts to active TB cases.
 - HIV infected persons.
 - Non-US born persons, including children, who have emigrated within the past 5 years from areas of the world where TB incidence is high.
 - Medical risks with immunosuppressive diseases to be determined individually by private or public medical providers.
 - Persons who inject illicit drugs.
 - Healthcare workers who work in hospitals with isolation rooms.
 - Employees and residents of residential drug treatment centers, nursing homes and correctional facilities.

NEW MEXICO REGISTER REFERENCE

New Mexico Register, Volume XV, Number 14, July 30, 2004
<http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/nmregister/xv/xv14/7.4.4repeal.htm>

This part 7 NMAC 4.4, Control of Communicable Disease in Health Facility Personnel (filed October 18, 1996) is hereby repealed effective July 30, 2004.