



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Health Department to hold town hall meeting on TB Jan. 14 in Marion

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health will hold a town hall meeting to inform the community about efforts to stop the current tuberculosis (TB) outbreak in Marion. The public is invited to attend the town hall on Thursday, Jan. 14, at 6:30 p.m. at the Francis Marion High School auditorium, 101 Hubbard Drive, Marion.

“This is a meeting open to everyone interested in learning more about the ongoing TB initiative underway in Perry County this month,” Pam Barrett, director of the Division of TB Control, said. “Attendees will have an opportunity to ask questions and have their concerns addressed.”

TB investigators have begun screening patients and providing preventive therapy to people who may have been exposed to multiple active TB patients in the area. Testing is done on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the Perry County Health Department at 1748 S. Washington St., Marion. All services are provided at no charge, no appointment is needed for this service, and all test results are confidential.

To encourage testing, payments are being provided to people who come in for screening and necessary treatment at Perry County Health Department. Patients will be paid as follows:

- \$20 to anyone coming in to be screened for TB by the TSPOT blood test.
- Another \$20 for returning after three days to get the result.
- A third \$20 for keeping an appointment to get a chest X-ray if it is recommended.
- An additional \$100 to a patient if it is recommended he or she take medication and treatment is completed.

Patients diagnosed with TB in other cities and towns in Alabama are known to be linked to cases in Marion. Specifically, 20 of 26 patients diagnosed since January 2014 are from Marion, four are from the Tuscaloosa area, and two are from Centreville.

This is a case rate of 253 per 100,000 population in the town of Marion. This far exceeds the TB case rate of 2.5 per 100,000 in the entire state of Alabama in 2015. Of these 26 patients, four of them are children. Three adults have died.

Symptoms of TB include cough lasting more than two weeks, shortness of breath, fever, night sweats, weight loss and fatigue. A person may be infected with the TB germ and have no symptoms. Fortunately, patients can be treated preventively before becoming ill.

For further information or questions, please contact Pam Barrett, Director, Division of TB Control, at (334) 467-8208, or pam.barrett@adph.state.al.us.

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