



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

RSA Tower 201 Monroe Street, Suite 914 Montgomery, AL 36104
Phone 334-206-5300 Fax 334-206-5520

www.adph.org

ADPH confirms 1 new TB case in Perry County, emphasizes message that TB is treatable

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Pam Barrett

(334) 467-8208

Karen Landers, M.D., F.A.A.P.

(256) 246-1714

The Alabama Department of Public Health has confirmed one additional case of tuberculosis (TB) disease in Marion, Perry County, Ala. This brings the total number of cases of TB disease reported since 2014 with a connection to Marion to 27. Of these, 21 people are residents of Perry County. TB disease is a serious condition, but is treatable with medication. People with TB disease are considered infectious and may spread TB germs to others if not treated. The new patient is not hospitalized and is doing well.

Forty-nine patients have tested positive for latent TB infection in Perry County since screening began on Jan. 11. Thirty-seven of these patients have already had chest X-rays read and will be started on preventive medicine. These people are not infectious since they do not have the disease. To date, 1,058 residents of Perry County have been tested for latent TB infection.

"There is a very important difference between latent TB infection and TB disease," reports Pam Barrett of the Division of TB Control. Persons with latent TB infection cannot spread the germ to other people. These persons have a positive TB skin test or a positive blood test for TB. They developed a positive test from being in close contact with a person who had TB disease. Without treatment, about 5 to 10 percent of persons with latent TB infection will develop TB disease at some time in their lives. Children, elderly persons, immunosuppressed persons, and persons with lung disease or diabetes who have been infected with the TB germ are at higher risk to develop TB disease.

Assistant State Health Officer Dr. Karen Landers said, "The citizens of Perry County are coming in to be tested and we appreciate their patience as we work to take care of every person who requests testing. We have good support from the citizens as well as community leaders who have been involved in meetings to educate and inform about TB. Preventing and treating TB will save people's lives."

Screening, testing and follow-up will continue every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, through Jan. 29. The Perry County Health Department will pay the following:

- \$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 that he or she take medication and treatment is completed.

Because of the high rate of TB infection in Marion, Perry County Health Department is the only local health department offering money to patients for TB screening and treatment. TB symptoms 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.

The Perry County Health Department is located at 1748 S. Washington St., Marion. All services are confidential and are provided at no charge. No appointment is needed for this service.

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.

-30-

1/21/16