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Press Release

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Tuberculosis screening program continues in Yukon-Kuskokwim region

Recent cases are no cause for alarm

ANCHORAGE — The Department of Health and Social Services, Alaska Tuberculosis Control Program, in coordination with the Section of Public Health Nursing, is currently responding to an increase in both lab-confirmed and suspected cases of tuberculosis in several Yukon-Kuskokwim region villages.

“TB has been a problem in Alaska villages as long as we can remember,” said Dr. Michael Cooper, Alaska TB program manager. “I want to assure village residents that treatment and public health control measures are promptly implemented for each identified case of TB, so while public concern is appropriate, this is not a cause for alarm.”

The state recommends TB screening for anyone who has been in contact with someone sick with TB, or for everyone who has had TB and has not been screened in the past year. Screening is also recommended for anyone with a persistent cough, night sweats, weight loss, fatigue, or who is coughing up blood.

The TB program is scheduled to revisit villages in the Y-K Delta during a full-village sweep in the next month.

“The TB program is working with Bethel area public health nurses to ensure that enhanced screening and contact investigations are taking place,” Cooper said. “This level of investigation is necessary when we see evidence of increased local TB activity in communities to ensure that the situation is promptly addressed.”

For more information on TB, go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/tb/topic/basics/default.htm>.

For more information on the Alaska TB Control Program go to:
<http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/id/tb.stm>.

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