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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 state tuberculosis control program is currently responding to an increase in both laboratory-confirmed and suspected cases of tuberculosis in a Yukon-Kuskokwim region village.

“TB has been a problem in Alaska villages as long as we can remember,” said Dr. Michael Cooper, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Tuberculosis Control Program manager. “I want to assure residents of the Y-K region that treatment and public health control measures are promptly implemented for each identified case of active TB, so while local public concern is appropriate, this is not a cause for alarm.”

The TB program is currently assisting state public health nurses, the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation, local village leaders and local providers with village-wide screening. Individuals with symptoms of active TB disease like productive cough, fever, night sweats, weight loss, fatigue, or spitting up blood are always the highest priority. During a village-wide screening, officials attempt to screen every resident to look for evidence of ongoing spread of disease.

“The TB program is benefiting from great collaboration across all levels 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 a community. It is a very effective way to rapidly control an outbreak of TB like this.”

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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