



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 27, 2018

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Doug Bolnick, Public Information Officer, 636-949-7408

HEALTH SERVICES' CLINIC EXPANDS TUBERCULOSIS TESTING OPTIONS

Skin and Blood Testing Options Now Available

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – About one-fourth of the world's population — including thousands of Americans — is infected with tuberculosis disease (TB). Although the bacteria that cause TB (*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*) are spread when an infected individual coughs, sneezes or talks, the disease is preventable and curable with testing and treatment.

Testing for Tuberculosis

As part of its efforts to prevent the spread of diseases in the community, the St. Charles County Division of Health Services offers testing and monitored treatment for tuberculosis. Two testing options are available:

- PPD Skin Test – A skin test determines if a person has been exposed to or infected with TB bacteria. To administer the test, a health care worker injects a small amount of liquid under the skin of the arm to form a wheel. The individual must return to the site of the test within 48 to 72 hours for a follow-up examination. *The cost for this examination through the Division of Health Services clinic is \$20.*
- QuantiFERON® Gold Blood Test – This option is recommended for individuals who have received the Bacille-Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccination previously, have had a positive PPD test in the past, or are deemed to be at “high risk” for the disease. For this test, a small amount of blood is delivered to a laboratory to test for exposure to the TB bacteria. Results do not require a return examination by the testing provider. *The cost for this examination through the Division of Health Services clinic is \$55, plus a \$10 per visit blood draw fee.*

Who Should Get Tested for Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis bacteria can live inside the body without making a person sick, so the best way to determine a possible infection is through testing. Testing is especially recommended for individuals in high risk categories, which include:

- Those who display symptoms of tuberculosis disease (including fever, night sweats, persistent cough, unexplained weight loss, weakness/fatigue, chest pain or coughing blood).
- Those who share the same breathing space or who have close interaction with someone known to have active TB disease.
- Persons with HIV infection, kidney disease or other conditions that weaken the immune system.
- Alcoholics and intravenous drug users.
- Nursing home residents.
- Those within or recently released from a correctional facility.
- Those who are from, or who have recently visited, a country with high TB disease rates.

In addition to these individuals, many employers and educational institutions require annual testing for their members.

(MORE)

(Tuberculosis Testing – Continued Page Two)

Scheduling Appointments and Payment Options

Screenings through the Division of Health Services' clinics are payable by cash, check and credit card (includes a service fee); individual health insurance plans that cover TB testing are covered as well. These services are offered between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday by appointment at the clinic, located at 1650 Boones Lick Road in St. Charles. PPD skin tests are not conducted on Thursdays due to the re-examination requirement and do not require a scheduled appointment. For more information on these and other available testing opportunities, please call 636-949-7319 or visit www.sccmo.org/chronicdisease.

-end-

About the St. Charles County Department of Public Health

The mission of St. Charles County's Division of Health Services is to promote healthy choices and improve the health of the community. To achieve these goals, program services include an Immunization Clinic for children and adults; nutrition education and supplemental food services for women, infants and children; chronic disease screening and prevention; Communicable Disease reporting and investigation; educational programming; the collection and distribution of birth and death certificates; assistance in applications for U.S. passports; and much more. For information on programs offered and to discover ways the division assists the community, visit <http://www.sccmo.org/HealthServices> or call 636-949-7400.