

March 1, 2019

Dear School Partners:

Columbus Public Health is working to protect the health and improve the lives of all children – and you are important partners in this mission. Thank you for working with us to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

While tuberculosis (TB) has declined in the U.S., TB is still a public health concern in our community. TB incidence in Franklin County is the highest of all Ohio counties, and is nearly one and half times higher than the U.S. incidence. These statistics confirm that TB prevention and control activities are critical to reducing deaths and eliminating TB in our community. To that end, testing and treatment of populations most at risk for TB include persons born in TB endemic countries and those who previously lived in or traveled to TB endemic countries.

Although Ohio does not require school districts to screen for TB, several districts have chosen to include TB risk screening and targeted testing at the time of enrollment. Should your district plan to update existing policies, or implement new testing requirements, Columbus Public Health suggests that the following screening questions serve as the foundation for additional screening and/or testing:

1. To your knowledge, have you been exposed to anyone with infectious TB disease?
2. Were you born outside of the United States? If yes: Where were you born?
3. Have you traveled outside of the United States? If yes: Where did you travel? How long did you stay?

Additional screening questions for enrolling students should include:

4. Have you ever had a chest x-ray that suggested TB?
5. Have you ever had a positive TB test?
6. Have you ever taken medicine for TB?

Students answering “yes” to any of the first three questions should provide documentation of a medical evaluation and chest x-ray or documentation for completion of TB treatment. Columbus Public Health recommends that children who are contacts to infectious TB disease and children who were born in or resided in TB endemic regions for more than 30 consecutive days in the previous five years, but cannot document their TB status, be referred to a health care provider for further evaluation. Students with positive TB tests should receive a chest x-ray, undergo medical evaluation and provide documentation ruling out active TB prior to attending class.

For technical support or more information, contact Linda Laroche, Director of the Ben Franklin TB Program, at 614-645-6445 or [lindal@columbus.gov](mailto:lindal@columbus.gov).

Best of Health,



Mysheika W. Roberts, MD, MPH  
Health Commissioner  
Columbus Public Health

