

# HEALTH ADVISORY



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Region 4 Public Health**  
Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum  
counties, and Cowlitz Tribe

**To: Physicians and other health care providers**

**Please distribute a copy of this information to each provider in your organization.**

Questions regarding this information may be directed to the following Region 4 health officers:

**Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH**  
Health officer

**Steven Krager, MD, MPH**  
Deputy health officer

Clark County Public Health, 564.397.8182  
Cowlitz County Health & Human Services, 360.414.5599  
Skamania County Community Health, 509.427.3850  
Wahkiakum County Health & Human Services, 360.795.6207

## Alert categories:

**Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.

## Tuberculosis testing for people previously incarcerated



### *Summary*

---

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH), Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC), and local health jurisdictions continue to work to address a large tuberculosis (TB) outbreak within the state prison system. Since July 2021, 28 people have been diagnosed with active TB. During the outbreak investigation, DOH and DOC identified over 2,900 potentially exposed contacts.

Over 800 exposed people were released from prison prior to their exposure being identified or declined testing while in prison. While local health jurisdictions have worked to notify these individuals of their exposure and offer testing, many individuals have not been successfully notified or tested. DOH and local health jurisdictions are asking health care providers to help ensure that all previously incarcerated people are offered TB testing.

The United States Preventive Services Task Force recommends TB screening testing for individuals at increased risk, including people who were born in, or have lived in, countries with high TB prevalence, as well as people who live in, or have lived in, high-risk congregate settings (e.g., homeless shelters or correctional facilities). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also recommends TB screening testing for people who work in correctional facilities.

### *Requested actions*

---

DOH and local health jurisdictions are asking health care providers to take the following actions:

- **Ask patients about risk factors for TB exposure** (country of birth, history of living in a country with high TB prevalence, history of living or working in a correctional facility, history of living in a homeless shelter).
- **Offer TB screening testing to patients at increased risk of TB** (unless they have a known history of TB infection or disease). Depending on test availability and the clinical situation, screening testing can be performed using tuberculin skin testing (TST) or interferon gamma release assays (IGRA).
- **Patients who test positive should receive a clinical evaluation and chest X-ray to rule out active TB disease.** If active TB disease is ruled out, initiate treatment for latent TB infection if clinically appropriate. If active TB disease is suspected or diagnosed, contact your local health jurisdiction (see contact information on last page).

Health care providers can contact their local health jurisdiction (see contact information on last page) with questions about TB testing and treatment.

**Additional resources**

---

- Screening for Latent Tuberculosis Infection in Adults: US Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation Statement:  
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2804319>
- Prevention and Control of Tuberculosis in Correctional and Detention Facilities: Recommendations from CDC:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5509a1.htm>
- CDC guidance on TB diagnosis: <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/topic/testing/diagnosingltbi.htm>
- CDC guidance on treatment of latent TB infection:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/tb/topic/treatment/ltbi.htm>

**Thank you for your partnership.**

<b>Local health jurisdiction</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Fax</b>
Clark County Public Health	564.397.8182	564.397.8080
Cowlitz County Health & Human Services	360.414.5599	360.425.7531
Skamania County Community Health	509.427.3850	509.427.0188
Wahkiakum County Health and Human Services	360.795.6207	360.795.6143