

Fairfax County Health Department
2013 Lee High School TB Investigation
SUMMARY REPORT



December 17, 2013

The Fairfax County Health Department has concluded its investigation of the three individuals who had active tuberculosis (TB) disease at Robert E. Lee High School in Springfield, Virginia. The goal of the investigation was to (1) determine who may have been exposed; (2) find out whether transmission had occurred; and if so, (3) prevent future cases of active TB disease. This report highlights key findings and summarizes the incident.

Background

- In December 2012, an individual from Lee High School was diagnosed with active TB disease. A contact investigation was initiated and completed at that time.
- In June 2013, two additional individuals from the same school were diagnosed with active TB disease. The Health Department reopened the December 2012 case and investigated all three cases together to determine whether the cases were linked.

Screening and Testing

- Between June and October 2013, the Health Department operated 19 points of testing (POT)—that were supported by 83 Medical Reserve Corps volunteers—for members of the Lee High School community for whom a recommendation had been made for TB symptom screening and testing (for the presence of latent TB infection). Testing was not mandatory and individuals were given the option of receiving care at the POT or through their private medical provider.
- A total of 2,277 students, faculty, and support staff were considered potentially exposed and therefore recommended for TB screening and testing.
 - Of these, 610 were no longer enrolled or affiliated with the school at the time of screening and testing. However, the Health Department contacted these individuals by phone and mail to inform them about the recommendation for screening and testing.
 - Of the remaining individuals, 96% of the currently-enrolled students and 77% of the faculty and support staff have been screened and tested for TB.

Results

- No new cases of active TB disease were identified at Lee High School.
- A total of 235 people tested positive for latent TB infection. All of these individuals were evaluated with chest x-ray to rule out lung involvement and offered treatment to prevent TB disease in the future.

Latent TB Infection	Active TB Disease
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No symptoms• Cannot spread TB• Should take medication to prevent TB disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has symptoms such as coughing• Is contagious• Needs treatment for TB disease

Discussion and Follow-up

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that one third of the world's population has latent TB infection. Since Fairfax County is highly diverse and the prevalence of latent TB infection in the community is unknown, determining the true level of transmission that may have occurred was challenging. It was also not entirely possible to determine which of the 235 positive TB tests were due to exposure to TB bacteria in the Lee High School setting. However, a comparison of the latent TB infection rates between U.S.-born individuals who were part of the investigation and the national average showed a five-fold increase, an indication that some transmission of TB bacteria occurred at Lee High School.
- The Health Department's Incident Management Team demobilized on October 18, 2013 and transferred the coordination of the final phase of the investigation to the agency's TB program. Nursing case management continues for individuals on TB prevention treatment. TB is preventable and curable if all prescribed medications are taken properly. To date, 79% of the individuals recommended for medications are receiving treatment through the Health Department and another 8% through their private health care provider.
- The Health Department has made numerous attempts to contact and follow up with individuals who have not yet been tested. A number of individuals declined TB tests. In October, the Health Department mailed final notices to those who have not yet been tested to strongly encourage them to be screened and tested for TB.



A Fairfax County, Va., publication. December 2013. For more information or to request this information in an alternate format, call the Fairfax County Health Department at 703-324-2051, TTY 711.