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## **Testing urged after active tuberculosis diagnosed at two hospitals in Riverside County**

Riverside County health officials are working with administrators at Hemet Valley Medical Center and Parkview Community Hospital in Riverside to determine who may have been exposed to tuberculosis after some hospital employees were diagnosed with an active form of the respiratory illness.

There is no indication yet the cases are related and officials have not determined how the individuals contracted the illness. The three employees – two at Hemet Valley and one at Parkview -- are undergoing treatment and are expected to recover. The individuals are not being identified.

Riverside University Health System-Public Health and the hospitals are notifying more than 2,000 staff members and patients who may have been exposed to the disease. Those receiving the notification are being urged to be tested for TB which can be done through their health care provider. Hemet Valley has made special arrangements for free TB testing of individuals seen at its hospital. The dates and times will be included in the notification letters. Those who do not receive a letter are not considered at-risk for TB exposure.

About 900 notifications are being sent from Hemet Valley and more than 1,200 from Parkview. Those who do not receive a letter are not considered at-risk for TB exposure. Those who test positive will be referred for an X-ray and evaluation for appropriate treatment.

“The risk of transmission is low, but TB can still be a serious illness,” said Dr. Cameron Kaiser, public health officer for the county. “If you receive notification you may have been exposed, getting tested promptly will ensure any risk you have is dealt with quickly.”

Tuberculosis is a disease spread through the air during prolonged, repeated and close contact with an individual who is infected with active tuberculosis. When left untreated, TB can result in serious complications. TB is not spread by shaking hands, sharing food or drink, or via bed linens or toilet seats.

Symptoms include a productive cough, unexplained weight loss, fever and fatigue. Not everyone infected with the TB bacteria becomes sick. A person with inactive (latent) TB cannot spread it to others.

Individuals concerned about TB can contact their health care provider or the Public Health Department Disease Control at 951.358.5107. For additional information about tuberculosis, visit [www.rivco-diseasecontrol.org](http://www.rivco-diseasecontrol.org)