



January 11, 2019

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Riverside City College student diagnosed with active tuberculosis; testing urged for some students, staff

A student at Riverside City College (RCC) has been diagnosed with active tuberculosis and Riverside County health officials are working with college representatives to identify students and staff who might have been exposed to the illness.

The student is receiving treatment and is recovering. The student is not being identified due to confidentiality requirements.

Riverside County health officials will be sending out letters to more than 200 RCC students who may have been exposed to the illness. Notification letters will be sent to the parents of students younger than 18. Staff members who may have been exposed have received notification from the college.

Students are being advised to contact campus health services to make arrangements for TB testing. Those who do not receive notification are considered not to be at risk for exposure, and TB testing is not recommended.

Riverside County Public Health Officer Dr. Cameron Kaiser emphasized the risk of transmission is low.

“While the risk of infection is low, that doesn’t mean there is no risk, so it’s important that those who are notified take the time to get tested,” Kaiser said. “If a person tests positive, we can treat them promptly.”

Tuberculosis is a disease spread through the air during prolonged, repeated and close contact with an individual who is infected with active tuberculosis. People may contract TB when breathing air exhaled by someone who is sick with the illness. 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. Not everyone infected with TB bacteria becomes sick. A person with inactive (latent) TB cannot spread it to others.

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