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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Eisenhower Medical Center and County of Riverside Department of Public Health
Address Tuberculosis Exposure

An employee at Eisenhower Medical Center (EMC) in Rancho Mirage has been diagnosed with active tuberculosis, and the hospital is working with county health officials to notify those who might have been exposed to the illness.

The individual is being treated and is expected to make a full recovery.

“The employee participated in mandatory annual tuberculosis screening, which led to this finding,” said Alan Williamson, MD, chief medical officer at Eisenhower Medical Center. “We are currently determining which patients and employees had exposure to this member of our staff and are working with the County of Riverside Department of Public Health to notify the limited group of exposed patients as quickly as possible via letter.”

Potentially exposed individuals will be advised that they need to be screened for TB. The screening consists of a TB skin test, followed by a chest x-ray if the test is positive. Patients will be advised in the letter of various locations where they can have the skin test.

Dr. Cameron Kaiser, County Public Health Officer said that the risk of transmission is very low, but urged those who may have been exposed to be tested.

“TB testing is being recommended as a precautionary measure.” Kaiser said. “It only takes a short time but will provide peace of mind.”

All hospital employees are required to be screened annually for TB. No other employee has tested positive. The medical center self-reported the illness to the California Department of Public Health-Licensing and Certification.

Tuberculosis is a disease spread by close prolonged contact with an individual who has active tuberculosis. People can become infected with TB by breathing air exhaled by someone who is sick with TB. 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. Common symptoms include a productive cough, unexplained weight loss, fever, and feeling tired. Not everyone infected with TB bacteria becomes sick. A person with inactive (latent) TB cannot spread the TB bacteria to others.

Anyone 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 the Department of Public Health's website www.rivco-diseasecontrol.org.