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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Health Officials Investigate Tuberculosis Exposure at a Community College**

An individual at College of the Desert in Palm Desert is suspected of having active tuberculosis (TB) and is being treated for the illness. The unidentified individual, who has not been on campus since last week, is expected to make a full recovery.

This is the first case of TB involving a school setting identified in Riverside County this year. Fifty-six TB cases were reported countywide in 2012. Eight cases have been reported thus far in 2013.

“College of the Desert is committed to the health and safety of all of our staff and students,” said Dr. Joel Kinnamon, superintendent/president.

The Department of Public Health is working closely with college officials to identify students and staff members who were in close and prolonged contact with the individual. The department today is sending a letter to those on campus who may have been exposed to the illness and recommending they be screened for TB infection. The screening consists of a TB skin test, followed by a chest x-ray if the test is positive.

“TB testing is being recommended as a precautionary measure, although the risk of transmission is very low. It is better to err on the side of caution,” said Dr. Cameron Kaiser, the county interim public health officer.

The disease is spread by close prolonged contact with an individual who has active tuberculosis. People can become infected by breathing air exhaled by someone who is sick. Left untreated, TB can result in serious complication, including death. 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 at 951-358-5107. For additional information about tuberculosis visit the Department of Public Health website [www.rivco-diseasecontrol.org](http://www.rivco-diseasecontrol.org).