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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 school 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 soon be sending out letters to more than 200 RCC students who may have been exposed to the illness. Staff members who may have been exposed have received notification from the college.

Students are being advised to be tested at a local community health clinic at no cost. 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, it’s important that those who are notified take the time to get tested,” Kaiser said. “If you do test positive, we can treat you 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.