

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease caused by bacteria called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. Microscopic droplets suspended in the air pass the TB organism from person to person. Infection can occur when an uninfected person comes in contact with someone who has active tuberculosis.

People who are exposed to TB may never get sick. They develop what is called **latent TB infection**. A person with **latent infection** is not contagious and does not show any signs or symptoms of being sick. The immune system controls the infection. Latent TB may develop into **active TB** if the immune system becomes weakened. A person with active TB disease is sick and shows signs or symptoms of the disease (e.g., persistent cough, night sweats, weight loss). People with **active TB** disease are infectious and can spread the TB bacterium to others.

#### **Who is required to have tuberculosis screening?**

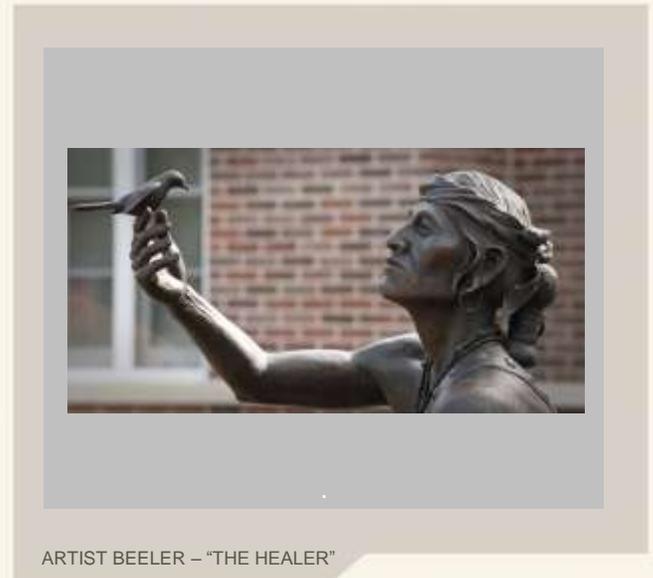
ALL newly enrolled or re-enrolled international students are required to have tuberculosis (TB) screening upon arrival at PSU. Tuberculosis **testing** will only be performed on students who are considered to be at high risk for tuberculosis based on the screening process. Failure to complete the required screening may result in the student's disenrollment.

#### **How will I be tested for TB?**

A blood test approved by the FDA specific for the tuberculosis bacteria will be performed on all high risk international students during the orientation process. The blood test is more specific than the skin test as it will not react to previous BCG vaccination.

#### **Can I waive out of the TB testing if I have documentation from my county?**

All international students will be required to be screened. No prior documentation (e.g., prior skin



tests, chest x-rays ) from a student's home country will be accepted for waiver purposes. The only documentation acceptable for waiving the TB screenings are results of a TB blood test performed in the U.S. within the past 12 months.

#### **When can I enroll in my classes?**

A student may enroll in their academic courses after the TB screening is completed. All students determined to be a high risk for tuberculosis **must** have the blood testing performed before they are cleared for enrollment.

#### **What if my TB blood test is positive?**

Students will be notified of their blood test results within 48-72 hours from the time the test was performed. Notification of results will come from the Bryant Student Health Services via a secure email communication. Persons with a positive blood test must undergo chest radiography and a medical exam to determine if they have active TB disease. Failure to comply with the required follow-up may result in subsequent notification of the Office of International Students that you are no

longer enrolled. *All international students are required to complete the **entire** TB screening process.*

### **What if my chest x-ray is normal?**

If the chest x-ray and medical exam are normal, treatment for **latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI)** will be recommended since this greatly reduces the risk of TB infection progressing to **active TB disease**. **Latent tuberculosis infection** indicates that the person is infected with the TB bacteria but is not currently contagious or showing any symptoms of **active TB disease**. Treatment for **LTBI** includes a daily regimen of an antibacterial medication (INH) and Vitamin B6 for 9 months. All students undergoing **LTBI** treatment will be monitored monthly for any potential medication side effects. Upon completion of the **LTBI** treatment, the student will be provided with proper documentation including blood test results, chest x-ray results, and the dosage and duration of the medication administration, as proof of the recommended treatment. Successful completion of **LTBI** will eliminate the need to undergo any further testing for TB unless the person develops symptoms of active TB.

### **Can I waive consent for the LTBI treatment?**

After receiving proper education regarding the benefits of LTBI, the student may elect not to receive the recommended LTBI treatment. A consent form signed by the student will be required when waiving the recommended treatment. All students who are determined to have **LTBI** and have signed a waiver against treatment will be instructed to seek medical care immediately upon developing any of the signs or symptoms of TB. These students will also be required to have a medical review of systems on an annual basis.

### **What if it is determined that I have active TB disease?**

Any person determined to have an active case of TB disease will be under the direct care of a medical provider. The student will **NOT** be allowed to attend classes until they are determined not to be contagious to others and have been cleared by a physician. A series of several medications are used for the treatment of active TB.

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