

County of Santa Clara

Public Health Department


Administration
976 Lenzen Avenue, 2nd Floor
San José, CA 95126



DATE: April 15, 2014

TO: District Superintendents
School Nurses
Health Care Providers

FROM: Sara H. Cody, MD 
Health Officer

Teeb Al-Samarrai, MD 
Tuberculosis Controller

**RE: Change in the Tuberculosis (TB) School Mandate:
From Universal Testing to Universal Risk Assessment and Targeted Testing**

Beginning June 1, 2014, the Santa Clara County Tuberculosis (TB) School Mandate will change from a requirement for universal TB testing to a requirement for universal TB risk assessment.

Santa Clara County has required TB testing for students entering school since 1989. This Health Officer Mandate was implemented at that time because TB rates rapidly increased. It was intended to ensure that children with TB were diagnosed early and treated appropriately when the infection was latent or “silent.” The California Health and Safety Code, § 121515, gives the county Health Officer authority to implement such mandates.

As TB rates have declined in the US and California, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the California Tuberculosis Controller’s Association (CTCA) have revised their recommendations. In place of universal TB testing, these bodies now recommend that healthcare providers ask a series of questions to assess a child’s risk of exposure to TB and target TB testing for children at increased risk for TB exposure or developing TB disease. Although rates of TB have declined in Santa Clara County since the Mandate was put in place, we continue to have one of the highest rates of TB in the US. Santa Clara County has very few cases of active TB among children, however, children remain vulnerable to being exposed to TB from others and are at greater risk of progressing to active TB disease if latent or “silent” TB infection is not detected and treated early.

In February 2014, the Public Health Department convened a School Mandate Review Task Force — including school representatives and pediatricians from the community — to review our local TB data, the AAP/CDC/CTCA recommendations, the academic literature, the policies of similar jurisdictions across California and the US, as well as challenges and advantages of different policy

Board of Supervisors: Mike Wasserman, Cindy Chavez, Dave Cortese, Ken Yeager, S. Joseph Simitian
County Executive: Jeffrey V. Smith

changes. Based on this review and discussion, Santa Clara County will no longer require universal testing but will transition to a mandate for universal risk assessment and targeted testing.

The new *Santa Clara County Public Health Department Risk Assessment for School Entry* form will be required for school registration effective June 1, 2014 for all children enrolling in kindergarten or transferring, at any grade level, from outside of Santa Clara County.

Please discard all prior references to the TB School Mandate and replace with the following documents:

- **NEW:** TB Risk Assessment for School Entry form (to be completed by healthcare providers)
- **Revised:** Guidelines to Revisions to the School Mandate and Requirements
- **Revised:** Frequently Asked Questions
- **Revised:** Dear Parent Letter
- **Revised:** Santa Clara County School Mandate Flow Chart
- **Revised:** IGRA Fact Sheet
- **NEW:** List of school health clinics and FQHCs in Santa Clara County

Please reproduce this entire packet for each school in your district as well as any location where centralized registration is done for new and transfer students. Please also feel free to post on District or School websites. These materials will also be available at www.sccphd.org/tb.

If you have questions about these changes, please contact the TB Prevention and Control Program at (408) 885-4214.

Thank you for helping us protect the health of children in Santa Clara County.