



## Kentucky Public Health

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### Tuberculosis: Not a Disease of the Past *52 Weeks of Public Health Spotlight: World TB Day*



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**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (March 24, 2018) – As a part of the 52 Weeks of Public Health campaign, the Department for Public Health (DPH) within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services is educating the public about tuberculosis (TB) and how prevent the spread of the disease in recognition of World TB Day.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) theme for this year's World TB Day on March 24<sup>th</sup> is **“Wanted: Leaders for a TB-Free United States. We can make history. End TB.”** This year's theme emphasizes the partnership between organizations and highlights efforts to eliminate TB across the country. To show his support, Governor Matthew Bevin has declared March 2018 as “TB Awareness Month” in Kentucky.

World TB Day is one of eight globally recognized public health campaigns marked by the World Health Organization (WHO). Among infectious diseases, TB remains the second leading cause of death in adults worldwide, second only to HIV-AIDS. The disease is commonly diagnosed in Kentucky, and can be potentially fatal usually attacking the lungs, but may also attack kidneys, spine or brain. In 2017, 65 TB cases were reported in Kentucky.

“Many people assume that TB is no longer a concern, but we continue to see cases each year.” said State Epidemiologist, Dr. Jonathan Ballard. “These cases further emphasize the need for continued outreach and education as we continue to make great strides in preventing the spread of the disease across the Commonwealth.”

TB is transmitted from person to person through the air when an infected person coughs, shouts, sneezes, speaks or sings. Symptoms of TB include a cough lasting more than three weeks, fever, night sweats, unexplained weight loss, coughing up blood, loss of appetite, chest pain, and

fatigue. People who are at high risk for becoming infected include people with poor access to healthcare, such as those who are homeless; people who live or work in high-risk congregate settings (i.e., homeless shelters, nursing homes, or prisons); intravenous drug users; healthcare workers; infants, children and adolescents exposed to high-risk adults; and people from foreign countries where TB is common.

TB is not contagious unless the infection is active and has progressed over time. Risk factors for the progression of TB infection include HIV infection, a new TB infection within the last two years, diabetes, immunosuppression, and age, especially children younger than four years old. For more information about TB as well as Kentucky's efforts to track and prevent the spread of the disease, please visit <http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/epi/tb.htm>.