Required Tuberculosis Testing for Employees and Volunteers in the Office of Public Health

POLICY RE: REQUIRED TESTING FOR TUBERCULOSIS – EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS IN THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH:

The *Louisiana Administrative Code* (Title 51 - Sanitary Code, Part II, Chapter 5, §50349) requires that employees or volunteers, involved in direct patient care, at any Office of Public Health (OPH) Parish Health Unit (PHU) or OPH out-patient health care facility must be tested for tuberculosis. Testing must be done at the time of, or just prior to the start of their employment or volunteer work. In OPH-PHUs, initial testing and annual rescreening should be conducted using an interferon-gamma release assay (IGRA).

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Public Health Unit (PHU) employees who provide direct patient care or provide face-to-face services to PHU clients must be retested annually. This includes, but is not limited to, physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, medical assistants, clerical staff, and disease intervention specialists (DIS).

This policy also applies to direct care employees and volunteers who work in regional offices, but do not provide services in a PHU setting, such as Nurse/Family Partnership Nurses. Radiologic technicians and laboratory personnel at the OPH Lab working with bacterial cultures for *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* are also required to be tested annually.

If other OPH personnel, such as program administrators, sanitarians, nurses or physicians not involved in direct patient care, work in environments which may be considered high risk for contact with persons with tuberculosis, e.g. frequent and prolonged visits to a jail or prison, they should be tested for tuberculosis at the time of or just prior to employment. These employees should also be retested annually if their work environment or individual medical risk factors continue to place them at an increased risk of TB exposure or TB infection. Initial and annual testing of this group of employees is at the discretion of individual Regional Medical Directors or Program Medical Directors.

Any employee with a positive IGRA test must receive a medical evaluation, by a physician, to rule out active TB disease and complete an approved therapy regimen of preventative TB medication.

If there are any questions regarding what might be considered a high-risk environment, individual medical risk factors, or any other issues related to this policy, employees or volunteers are urged to consult with their supervisor and contact their Regional TB Control Program Manager.