

March 2013

**TO: Administrator of Long Term Care Home**

**RE: Tuberculosis (TB) Screening Recommendations for Residents**

On July 1, 2010 the *Long Term Care Homes Act, 2007* was proclaimed. Prior to this change in legislation, in the Region of Peel, a TB skin test was required for residents prior to admission to a long term care home (LTCH). The *Long Term Care Homes Act, 2007* and its regulations set out requirements for LTCH licensees with respect to screening for TB. This letter provides an overview regarding changes to the TB screening recommendations for residents.

### **Recommendations for TB Screening for Residents in Long Term Care Homes**

According to the LTCH Act, 2007, Ontario Regulation 79/10, Section 229 (10), the licensee shall ensure that the following screening measures are in place:

*“Each resident admitted to the home must be screened for tuberculosis within 14 days of admission unless the resident has already been screened at some time in the 90 days prior to admission and the documented results of this screening are available to the licensee.”*

Peel Public Health recommends the following in order to screen residents for TB disease prior to admission to the LTCH:

1. **Chest x-ray:** A chest x-ray (posterior-anterior and lateral) taken within 90 days prior to admission to the facility. If the x-ray was not done within the 90 days prior to admission, it should be taken within 14 days of admission. A copy of the x-ray report must be provided to the home.
2. **Medical assessment:** A physical assessment and symptom review by a physician/nurse practitioner to rule out active pulmonary TB should be done within 90 days prior to admission, or within 14 days of admission, to ensure that signs and symptoms of active TB are absent. A checklist for the review of symptoms and chest x-ray findings is enclosed and can be used in your pre-admission medical assessment forms.

If signs and symptoms and/or chest x-ray indicate potential active pulmonary disease, the resident should not be admitted until three sputum samples, taken at least eight hours apart, are submitted to the Public Health Laboratory for testing (Acid Fast Bacilli and Culture) and the results are negative. It can take up to eight weeks for a final culture report.

3. **TST (<65 years old only):** In addition to the above, for residents <65 years of age who are previously skin test negative or unknown, a 2-step tuberculin skin test (TST) is recommended.

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A TST is not recommended for residents who are  $\geq 65$  years of age, or those who have had a previously positive TST. For residents with a previous TST result, the latest result should be recorded in mm including the date the TST was administered.

4. **Transfers:** Prior to transfer from another facility, a physical assessment and symptom review of the resident, by a physician/nurse practitioner to rule out active pulmonary TB is recommended. In addition the chest x-ray previously done upon admission or any more recent radiology should be reviewed. If there is any indication of possible active TB, a repeat chest x-ray, sputum testing and any other necessary investigations should be done to rule out active pulmonary TB disease before the resident is transferred.

Included with this letter is more information about TB screening including:

- An Active TB Screening Checklist for Clinicians, which may be sent to health care providers as part of the pre-admission medical assessment forms.
- Recommendation For Tuberculosis (TB) Screening in Long Term Care and Retirement Homes.
- Frequently Asked Questions: Tuberculosis (TB) Screening in Long Term Care and Retirement Homes.

These documents are also available on Peel Public Health's web page:  
<http://www.peelregion.ca/health/tb/>.

If you have any questions regarding TB screening, please contact the TB Program at:  
Tel: 905-791-7800 ext. 2458/2539  
Fax: 905-565-8428

Sincerely,



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Enclosures (3)