



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION  
Feb. 26, 2010

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## **TUBERCULOSIS CASE REPORTED AT SHARP GROSSMONT HOSPITAL** *HHSa and Hospital Working Together to Notify Patients, Visitors and Employees*

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSa) is working with Sharp Grossmont Hospital officials to notify patients, visitors and employees who may have been exposed to a hospital worker who has been diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB). The period of concern is Oct. 4, 2009 to Jan. 20, 2010, and limited to individuals who worked or visited one patient care floor of the hospital's West Tower between 7:30 p.m. and 7:30 a.m.

The hospital worker had an intermittent cough and did not show full symptoms of active TB until late January, according to Sharp Grossmont officials. The employee stopped working after visiting a physician, who suspected TB to be the cause of the illness, which was confirmed earlier this month after testing.

"HHSa is working closely with the hospital to notify the individuals who may have been exposed," said Dean Sidelinger, MD, MEd, Deputy County Public Health Officer. "TB is treatable and curable. Most people who are exposed do not develop the disease, but we recommend that they speak with their health care provider about getting tested to be sure."

Hospital officials have identified 545 patients that were potentially exposed, and letters are going out to the patients and their providers. Notifications will be sent to individuals who were on the patient care floor of the West Tower during the days and times when the employee worked. Individuals who were potentially exposed to TB will also receive information about the availability of testing.

Symptoms of active TB include persistent cough, fever, night sweats and unexplained weight loss. Individuals with no medical provider, or anyone who would like more information about tuberculosis, may call the County TB Control Program at (619) 692-8621. More information for concerned individuals about TB testing and specific dates and locations of exposure can be obtained by calling Sharp HealthCare at 1-800-82-SHARP (1-800-827-4277), during the work week and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. this Saturday and Sunday.

Tuberculosis is not uncommon in the San Diego region. This is the 15<sup>th</sup> case in 2010. In 2009, there were 223 cases reported in San Diego County.

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