Oberlin College Student Health Services
Professional Services Building
247 West Lorain St., Suite A
Oberlin, Ohio 44074

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff,

Oberlin College was notified late Monday by the Mercy Tuberculosis Clinic (Lorain County) that a member of the campus community has been diagnosed with an active case of tuberculosis (TB). The individual has responded well to treatment under the care of the clinical staff at Mercy TB Clinic and no longer poses a health risk to others. The individual is expected to make a full recovery.

Although tuberculosis (TB) is a contagious disease, TB cannot be spread by casual contact, but must be passed from one person to another via particles released into the air when the person with TB coughs, sneezes, or speaks. Individuals most at risk are people the patient spends time with every day. TB is an easily treatable and curable disease and most members of the Oberlin community are at low risk. Transmission only occurs through prolonged close contact in a shared airspace.

TB is NOT spread by shaking someone’s hand, sharing food or drink, touching bed linens or toilet seats, sharing toothbrushes, or kissing. TB is less contagious than measles, mumps, chicken pox, and influenza, and, even if a person is infected, the disease may remain dormant and not contagious to others.

To protect the health of the students, faculty, and staff, the college is working closely with the Mercy TB Clinic and the Ohio Department of Health to identify persons who were at risk of exposure and to offer tests to those persons as well as all members of the campus community who have any concerns about exposure. Individuals identified for testing will be contacted in the next 24 hours. Testing and treatment mitigates the risk of further transmission.

After the at-risk individuals are notified, staff from the Mercy TB Clinic will be on campus to provide tests. Tests will be administered at Oberlin College Student Health Services free of charge on Tuesday, March 3 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Those who have been tested must return to the Office of Student Health on Thursday, March 5 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., when a nurse will read the test.

An alternative testing date is being arranged for individuals who are unavailable for testing on March 3.
Individuals contacted are strongly encouraged to make testing a priority. Although the Ohio Department of Health does not recommend TB testing for people who are not at risk for infection, anyone who would like to be tested should go to the scheduled testing session at Student Health Services on Tuesday, March 3 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

A positive test is attributable to a variety of sources and does not necessarily indicate that this community member was the source of the infection.

If you have questions about TB, call the Mercy Tuberculosis Clinic at 440-244-3017.

For more detailed information about TB, visit: http://www.cdc.gov/tb/publications/faqs/default.htm

If you have additional questions contact Student Health Services: 440-775-8180 / student.health@oberlin.edu

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