

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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**Additional TB infection cases identified at Olathe Northwest High School**

JOHNSON COUNTY, KAN. (March 18, 2015) – Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and Johnson County Department of Health and Environment (JCDHE) report that out of the more than 300 students and staff tested for tuberculosis (TB) at Olathe Northwest High School, only 8 percent (27 people) have tested positive. Health officials began calling those with TB positive test results on Monday and letters were mailed to the homes of those with negative test results (no infection).

“The number of individuals with TB infection does not exceed what we would anticipate in this setting,” said Lougene Marsh, director of the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment. “Of course, we had hoped we wouldn’t find any additional TB cases, but we knew this was a possibility. That’s why we took such thorough steps to test everyone who might have been in close contact with the first confirmed case of TB disease.”

People with TB infection are not contagious, do not feel sick, and do not have TB symptoms. People with TB disease can spread the bacteria to others, feel sick and can have symptoms including fever, night sweats, cough and weight loss.

Individuals with positive test results will take a chest x-ray and begin treatment with antibiotics to kill the TB bacteria to prevent the development of TB disease. Chest x-rays and medication will be provided free of charge by KDHE and JCDHE.

“Early identification and treatment of TB infection is the key to preventing progression to TB disease,” said Marsh. “That’s why we are working so closely with the school and KDHE to investigate this case and assure that all precautions are being taken for the safety of everyone in the school and the community.”

Blood tests will be repeated on May 5 for those contacts who were identified as exposed to TB disease during the spring semester of the school year. This second test is necessary as it can take up to eight weeks for TB bacteria to show up positive in a TB test.

For more information about TB, visit [www.cdc.gov/tb](http://www.cdc.gov/tb) or JCDHE’s website, [www.jocogov.org/jcdhe](http://www.jocogov.org/jcdhe).

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**Media Only:**

Lougene Marsh, director of the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment, will be available for interviews today (March 18) from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at JCDHE, 11875 S. Sunset Drive, Olathe, KS 66061. Please call the JCDHE Media Line at 913-477-8436 to schedule an interview.

**About Johnson County, Kansas**

Located in the southwestern quadrant of the Kansas City Metropolitan Region, Johnson County, Kansas is a community of choice with a current population of more than 560,000, making it the most populated of the 105 counties in Kansas, but traditionally having the lowest mill levy in the state. For more information visit the county's website at [www.jocogov.org](http://www.jocogov.org).