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Contact:

Barbara D. Mitchell, MSW
Public Information Officer
Johnson County Department of Health & Environment
Media Line: (913) 477-8436
barbara.mitchell@jocogov.org

Christine Hamele
Vice President Marketing, Business Development/Community Relations
Overland Park Regional Medical Center
Phone: (913) 541-6845; Cell (913) 208-5566
christine.hamele@hcamidwest.com

Kimberly Winter Stern
Overland Park Regional Medical Center
(913) 449-4294
kimberly@sternwrites.com

Tuberculosis Case Confirmed by Johnson County Department of Health & Environment

Johnson County, Kansas – (November 6, 2013) The Johnson County Department of Health and Environment (JCDHE) and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) have confirmed a recent positive case of Infectious – Pulmonary (Lung) Tuberculosis Disease (TB) in Johnson County.

Health Officials have confirmed that the individual had previously been a patient at Overland Park Regional Medical Center (OPRMC).

Through an ongoing investigation, JCDHE has determined that this situation has potentially affected a limited number of OPRMC staff and patients and believes the risk of transmission is extremely low.

OPRMC is cooperating fully and transparently with public health officials' efforts and following best practice guidelines to effectively address the investigation.

“A thorough contact investigation began immediately to determine anyone who may have been exposed to the patient,” says John Romito, MD, chief medical officer, Overland Park Regional Medical Center. “People, including staff and patients, who need to undergo testing in the next week have already been contacted.”

“The risk of transmission is very low,” says Phil Griffin, BBA, CPM, KDHE tuberculosis controller. “TB testing is being conducted as a standard precautionary measure.”

According to JCDHE, TB is spread through the air by coughing, laughing, singing and sneezing. **The only way to contract the infection is by prolonged close contact in very close proximity to a person who has the TB disease.** TB cannot be spread through casual contact or by contact with someone's clothing or eating utensils.

TB infection may be detected eight or more weeks after the exposure, and if treated, greatly reduces the risk of the infection ever progressing to TB disease. Only five to 10 percent of people who are infected with TB, and have a normal immune system, will ever develop TB disease in their lifetime. Of those who progress to disease, it generally develops within a couple of years following exposure or later in life when the immune system may be weakened.

Symptoms of TB include a productive cough persisting more than three weeks, unexplained weight loss, night sweats, chills, fever, coughing up blood, fatigue and/or blood in the urine.

TB can be treated and cured with appropriate medications.

The patient is in isolation and responding well to treatment.

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