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## **Tuberculosis Case Reported**

SHELBY, NC – The Cleveland County Health Department is investigating a tuberculosis (TB) case involving an individual at Gardner-Webb University. The local health department was notified on March 4 of the TB case and is required by law to investigate. The department follows the North Carolina TB Control Program protocols in managing investigations.

While it is important for our community to be aware of this situation, a relatively small number of individuals are likely to have been exposed, and **no one is at immediate risk of any health problems**. TB is a disease that generally develops over weeks to months, and it is completely curable with medications.

Local public health officials have worked with Gardner-Webb University faculty and staff to identify individuals who may have been exposed to the disease through close and prolonged contact with the positive individual. **Everyone identified as a contact will be notified directly by phone, text or e-mail explaining the need to be tested for TB. The vast majority of employees and students will not be contacted, and do not need any testing or treatment for TB.**

**Only individuals who are contacted directly by university staff identifying them as a potential contact will need to be tested.** The university is working directly with the Cleveland County Health Department to arrange TB testing on campus for all individuals identified as a contact at no cost to the individual.

“After consultation with the health department and thorough contact investigations, we are confident we have a good list of possible contacts. There is no need to test the entire university population,” said Director of Environmental and Occupational Safety for Gardner-Webb University, Barry Lane.

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TB is transmitted when a sick person coughs, sneezes, or speaks. The germs are expelled into the air, and if a nearby person breathes them in, that person can become infected with TB.

“TB generally develops over weeks to months and is completely curable if detected early and treated properly with medication,” said DeShay Oliver, Deputy Health Director, Cleveland County Health Department. Symptoms include productive cough lasting longer than three weeks, unexplained fever, profuse sweating at night, appetite loss, unexplained weight loss, shortness of breath, chest pain, and excessive fatigue. However, all of these symptoms can be caused by many other diseases besides TB.”

**A positive TB test result does not mean that a person is sick with TB or that he or she will develop TB disease.** If an individual has a positive TB skin test, he or she will be referred to the Cleveland County Health Department for further follow-up.

To learn more about TB, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/topic/basics/default.htm>.

For questions or additional information, you may contact the Cleveland County Health Department at 980-484-5100.

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