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Kane County Health Department Raises Awareness on World TB Day

(Aurora, IL) World TB Day is Thursday, March 24th, and the Kane County Health Department wants to raise awareness on one of the world's deadliest diseases – Tuberculosis. Raising awareness improves the ability of public health officials to combat the disease through diagnosis and proper treatment and as a result prevents the spread of the disease to other people.

Tuberculosis, or TB, is a contagious disease caused by bacteria called Mycobacterium Tuberculosis. The bacteria can be spread by someone with active TB through the air, for example by coughing or sneezing.

Symptoms of TB disease include prolonged cough, fever, weight loss and night sweats. A person with TB Disease usually has a positive tuberculin skin test and has active TB bacteria in his or her body. That person is at risk of spreading the disease to others and so must obtain treatment in order to cure the disease and prevent its spread.

It should be noted that not everyone infected with the TB bacteria becomes sick. This is known as latent TB infection. A person with latent TB infection will usually test positive with the tuberculin skin test. Those with latent TB do not feel sick and are not contagious, however, they may become sick if the bacteria ever become active within the body. As a result, people with latent TB should seek treatment in order to prevent the development of TB Disease.

In 2004, Kane County reported 13 cases of Tuberculosis. Foreign born persons accounted for 66% of those cases, 67% were male, and the highest percentage of cases were found among the 25 to 44 year old age group. Worldwide, 9 million people become sick with TB and over 2 million TB-related deaths occur each year. The number of cases of TB in Kane County and in the United States are on the decline, however, prevention and vigilance in monitoring and treating cases is needed in order to eliminate TB altogether.

Kane County Health Department provides prevention services including skin testing, chest x-rays, nursing assessment, physician evaluation and if indicated, medication administration.

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