



ACTIVE TB CASES IN RECENTLY ARRIVED LAOTIAN HMOND REFUGEES FROM THAILAND

TO: West Virginia Local Health Departments, Health Care Providers, Health Care Facilities, Health Professional Organizations and Other Health Partners

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LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY VACCINE PROVIDERS, HEALTH CARE FACILITIES, AND OTHER APPLICABLE PARTNERS

OTHER RECIPIENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO ASSOCIATION MEMBERS, STAFF, ETC.

Since January 2004, CDC has been collaborating closely with the Department of State and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to resettle approximately 16,000 Laotian Hmong refugees from Thailand. From June 2004 through January 2005, approximately 9,000 refugees have resettled to 27 U.S. states, most in Minnesota, California, Wisconsin, Michigan, and North Carolina.

Before U.S. resettlement, all refugees undergo a mandated overseas evaluation for tuberculosis (TB), HIV infection, syphilis and other sexually transmitted diseases, leprosy, and mental disorders. Under current U.S. regulations, all refugees 15 years of age or older are screened for pulmonary TB by chest X-ray (CXR), followed by a sputum smear if CXR readings are abnormal or if the refugee has signs or symptoms consistent with TB. In addition to the required standard overseas screening, because of concerns about potential high prevalence of TB, CDC has recommended the addition of TB cultures and directly observed therapy (DOT) to improve diagnostic testing and management of tuberculosis in this population.

From June through September 2004, CDC received reports of four refugees identified overseas with multidrug-resistant (MDR) TB. In addition, from July 2004 through January 2005, CDC received reports from one state of six active TB cases in recently arrived Hmong refugees; two of three culture-confirmed TB cases were MDR. Moreover, CDC received recent reports from IOM that additional refugees with MDR TB have been identified during enhanced overseas screening.

CDC has recommended a temporary halt in the movement of the approximately 6,000 Hmong refugees still in Thailand until further investigation and expanded TB screening and treatment guidelines are developed. CDC has initiated an overseas epidemiologic investigation in Thailand. CDC staff will travel to Thailand to join the Thailand Ministry of Public Health-US CDC Collaboration and IOM to investigate the epidemiology of TB disease, implement appropriate measures to control potential disease transmission, and provide recommendations to optimize overseas TB diagnosis and treatment and assure safe movement and resettlement of this refugee population. In collaboration with state and local health partners, CDC will also begin an investigation of TB disease among the 9,000 Hmong refugees already resettled in the United States. The Department of State will issue a press release regarding the Hmong refugees on Friday, January 28, 2005.

NEEDED ACTION

If any Laotian Hmong refugees from Thailand should come to you for care:

Do medical evaluation for Latent Tuberculin Infection (LTBI) or TB disease (tuberculin skin test, chest x-ray, signs/symptoms, etc.) and contact the West Virginia TB Control Program at 800-330-8126 or (304)558-3669.

OTHER INFORMATION

For more information contact the TB Control Program at 800-330-8126 or (304)558-3669.

This Message was directly distributed to Local Health Departments, Professional Societies (e.g., WVAPIC, WVSMA, WVHA, WVHCA, etc.), WVDHHR Disaster Network and Health Care Providers via a partnership with WVMI

Categories of Health Alert messages:

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