Memo

From: Gregg Lichtenstein, MD, MBA, Director, Student Health Services
To: SDSU Students
Date: 3/21/14
Subject: National Shortage of Tuberculosis (TB) Skin Test Solution

In April 2013, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) announced a nationwide shortage of the solution used to perform TB skin tests (TSTs) as the two manufacturers of this product are unable to supply the demand. This shortage continues into 2014. Despite our best efforts to obtain TST solution, we have been limited to receiving only 50 doses of TST per month, and are sometimes unable to meet the needs of our patients.

We realize that a number of students require TB testing before placement in certain settings such as medical facilities, schools, and social service centers. Some facilities require the use of a 2-step TST, necessitating that a student return for a second skin test about a week after the first test.

The only alternative for TB testing is a blood test that uses a technique called interferon gamma release assay (abbreviated as IGRA). IGRA s are felt to be at least as accurate as TSTs and have an advantage over skin tests in that they do not require a follow-up visit to read the test (or a total of 4 visits for a 2-step test). The IGRA offered by Student Health Services is called Quantiferon-TB and costs $54. Students receiving this test can obtain their results through our secure web portal, HealtheConnect.sdsu.edu rather than having to return for another visit.

In the event that we are unable to offer you a TST, and you do not desire a Quantiferon test, you are certainly welcome to check with your own physician regarding availability of TSTs. If our supply of the TST solution becomes critically low, we may only offer Quantiferon testing to students who request 2-step testing.

To schedule a visit for a TB test, please call 619-594-4736.