

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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A student at Chadron State College has been diagnosed with active tuberculosis disease, commonly known as TB. The student has been hospitalized and is undergoing treatment for the disease.

“While the name of the student is not being released for confidentiality reasons, Panhandle Public Health District and college officials are working with the student to identify those people who are known to have had close, regular contact with the student,” PPHD Nurse Becky Corman said. “Those people are being contacted and asked to come in for testing to determine whether they have been exposed to the disease. If someone tests positive, medication is available to help prevent the active form of TB from developing.”

Corman said TB is a disease that can damage a person’s lungs or other parts of the body causing serious illness. It is spread when a person with active, untreated TB germs in the lungs or throat expels those germs into the air by coughing, sneezing or speaking. Only people who breathe these germs into their lungs can become infected.

“Usually people who have had very close, day-to-day contact with the infected person are the only persons who are at a higher risk of contracting the illness,” Corman said. “TB is less contagious than measles, mumps, chickenpox and influenza.”

Once laboratory testing deems the student is improving and is no longer contagious, the student will be able to return to class. Nebraska is considered a low incidence state for TB, and Nebraska saw 32 cases of TB in 2009, Corman concluded.

For more information on TB, please go to www.pphd.org or <http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/puh/cod/Tuberculosis/tbindex.htm#Data>

The purpose of the Panhandle Public Health District is to educate the region it serves about the prevention of epidemics, spread of contagious diseases, injury, illness and disability. The district is charged with promoting and encouraging healthy behaviors. They promote the quality and accessibility of health services and protection against environmental hazards. Through education, protection and promotion of these issues, the Panhandle Public Health District believes the quality of life of the residents they serve can be greatly improved.