

MEDIA RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

OTTAWA, IL -- The LaSalle County Health Department would like to announce that World TB Day is Thursday, March 24th. This is the 140th anniversary of Robert Koch's discovery of the TB bacillus. When Koch announced his discovery on March 24, 1882 in Berlin, Germany, tuberculosis was responsible for the death of one of every seven people living in Europe and the United States.

The Stop TB Partnership has selected the theme for this year's World TB Day: "Invest to End TB. Save Lives." Its design is to build public awareness that tuberculosis today remains an epidemic in much of the World causing the deaths of several million people each year. The disruptions caused by the pandemic have led to increased mortality from TB, decreased the number of people diagnosed and treated for TB, and dangerously affected the rights of people with TB. The general symptoms of TB disease include feeling sick or weak, weight loss, fever and night sweats. TB of the lungs causes the general symptoms plus coughing, sometimes producing blood, and chest pain.

TB is caused by an organism called Mycobacterium tuberculosis. When a person with active TB disease coughs or sneezes, tiny particles containing M. tuberculosis may be expelled into the air. If another person inhales air that contains these particles, transmission from one person to another may occur. However, not everyone infected with the TB germ becomes sick; as a result, two TB related conditions exist; latent TB infection (LTBI) and active TB disease -- both of which are treatable and curable. There are an estimated 13 million persons in the United States with latent TB infection, and about 10% of these infected individuals will develop TB disease at some point in their lives. TB is not a disease of the past, TB can infect anyone.

Today, one-third of the World's population is infected with TB and about 2 million people die of this disease each year, even though it is curable. To find out more about TB, or to see about getting tested for a possible TB exposure, contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit our website at www.lasallecounty.org. ###

