

## HEALTH ADVISORY



# Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands  
1 Lower Navy Hill Road, Navy Hill, Saipan, MP 96950



March 23, 2022  
3:15 p.m. ChST

CHCC-PR-22-017

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### March 24 is World TB Day

Each year, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) recognizes World TB Day on March 24 and the importance of global strategies to one day end tuberculosis (TB).

#### **What is World TB Day?**

March 24 commemorates the date in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch announced his discovery of mycobacterium tuberculosis, the bacteria that causes TB.

Today, 140 years later and all the advancements made to find its cure, TB remains a burden in places like the CNMI. In 2020, the CNMI had 75.2 cases per 100,000 people compared to 2.2 cases per 100,000 in the U.S.

#### **TB disease versus TB infection (LTBI)**

Tuberculosis is a highly contagious but curable disease that is spread from person to person through the air. TB germs are put into the air when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, speaks, or sings. Persons who breathe in the air containing these TB germs can get either TB infection or disease.

People with latent TB infection (LTBI) have TB germs in their bodies, but they are not sick because the germs are not active. These people do not have symptoms of TB disease and cannot spread the germs to others. However, they may develop TB disease in the future. They are often prescribed treatment to prevent them from developing TB disease.

People with TB disease are sick from TB germs that are active, meaning that they are multiplying and destroying tissue in their body. TB disease usually affects the lungs, but it can also affect other parts of the body such as the brain, kidneys, or spine. Usual symptoms include:

- Bad cough that lasts 3 weeks or longer
- Chest pain
- Coughing up blood
- Feelings of weakness
- Weight loss
- Fever
- Night sweats

**What should you do?**

TB can be curable if care happens early.

Any person who has recently traveled to a country with high rates of TB and are experiencing TB symptoms should see their health care provider and share their concerns.

CHCC staff will contact persons who may have been exposed to a person with TB.

The CHCC offers the following to help end TB:

- Medical evaluation
- Active TB disease and LTBI treatment
- Case management and contact tracing
- Directly observed therapy

For more information about tuberculosis prevention and treatment, call the CHCC Population Health Services TB/Hansen's Disease Program at (670) 236-8718.

For more information about CHCC programs, follow @cnmichcc on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter; visit <https://www.chcc.health/>; or call (670) 234-8950.

This press release may be found online at <https://www.chcc.health/pressrelease.php>.