



**JONATHAN E. FIELDING, M.D., M.P.H.**  
Director and Health Officer

**JONATHAN E. FREEDMAN**  
Chief Deputy Director

313 North Figueroa Street, Room 806  
Los Angeles, California 90012  
TEL (213) 240-8117 • FAX (213) 975-1273

[www.publichealth.lacounty.gov](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov)

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February 1, 2012

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. *je fielding mo*  
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **NOTICE OF PROPOSED CHANGE TO TUBERCULOSIS  
SCREENING POLICY FOR THE SCHOOL-AGED POPULATION**

This is to inform you that, after a careful review of both the trends in pediatric TB incidence in Los Angeles County (LAC) and the most current public health and medical guidelines, the Department of Public Health (DPH) will be changing its policy regarding the required TB screening of students entering LAC schools. As detailed in the attached report, evidence indicates that universal testing is no longer justified.

Effective July 1, 2012, DPH is proposing to replace the current universal *testing* policy with a universal *screening*, targeted testing policy to encourage the targeted testing of students at elevated risk for TB.

Over the next six months, the DPH TB Control Program will work with schools, providers and relevant stakeholders to emphasize the need for and importance of the first grade school entry physical exam requirement. Extensive efforts will be made to ensure that physicians have access to and are acquainted with screening, testing and follow-up recommendations. The TB Control Program plans to engage in comprehensive outreach to providers in the form of presentations, newsletter article publications, and website postings.

This evidence-based approach is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other health organizations. It will prevent unnecessary testing in thousands of children who falsely test positive for TB infection from receiving treatment regimens that may harm the liver. Finally, this approach allows DPH to focus its efforts on interventions better suited for finding cases and reducing infection rates.

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If you have any questions or would like additional information about this policy change, please let me know.

JEF:FA

I:/cdcp/memos&letters/memo to Board school mandate

Attachment

c: Chief Executive Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors