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ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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NEWS RELEASE

Public Health confirms 47 people with TB infection in Perry County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health has confirmed 47 people have been identified with tuberculosis (TB) infection in Perry County. Patients who have tested positive with TB infection will receive further testing and treatment, including a chest X-ray.

To date, 798 residents of Perry County have been tested for TB over the past three days. A community meeting will be held Tuesday, January 19, at 6:30 p.m. at the Berean Baptist Church in Marion. At that time, representatives from Public Health will be available to update residents about the outbreak and the TB screening program.

Assistant State Health Officer Dr. Karen Landers said, "We will continue to screen and test individuals to ensure that we have conducted a thorough investigation, as well as to educate the public about our response process. Once again, we thank the residents of Perry County for their outstanding support during this time."

To encourage screening and follow-up, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, through Jan. 29 the Perry County Health Department will pay

- \$20 to anyone coming in to be screened for TB by the TSPOT blood test.
- Another \$20 for returning after three days to get the result.
- A third \$20 for keeping an appointment to get a chest X-ray if it is recommended.
- An additional \$100 to a patient if it is recommended that he or she take medication and treatment is completed.

Because of the high rate of TB infection in Marion, Perry County Health Department is the only local health department offering money to patients for TB screening and treatment.

Symptoms of TB include cough lasting more than two weeks, shortness of breath, fever, night sweats, weight loss and fatigue. A person may be infected with the TB germ and have no symptoms. Fortunately, patients can be treated preventively before becoming ill.

The Perry County Health Department is located at 1748 S. Washington St., Marion. All services are confidential and are provided at no charge. No appointment is needed for this service.

For further information or questions, please contact Pam Barrett, Director, Division of TB Control, at (334) 467-8208, or pam.barrett@adph.state.al.us.