



Brenda Fitzgerald, MD, Commissioner

Nathan Deal, Governor

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Memo

To: District Health Directors

From: Brenda Fitzgerald, MD

CC:

Date: 1/25/2012

Re: Latent Tuberculosis Infection (LTBI) in Children less than Five Years Old is a Reportable Condition in Georgia

Latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI) in a child less than 5 years of age was added to the list of reportable conditions that are immediately notifiable to public health authorities in Georgia in 2003. LTBI in a child less than 5 years of age is a sentinel event because it indicates recent community transmission. Infants and young children with LTBI are at high risk (40%) for progression to active TB disease. Young children are more likely to develop life-threatening forms of tuberculosis (TB) such as TB meningitis and disseminated TB disease.

When LTBI in a child less than five years of age is reported, whether through contact screening or by a HealthCheck evaluation, public health personnel should initiate contact investigations to identify the source of the infection, recommend appropriate treatment, follow-up the child to ensure completion of treatment and monitor for development of active disease. Early identification of TB infection and treatment in children can prevent progression to active disease and identify a previously undiagnosed and untreated case of active TB.

TB case rates among children under five years old have been steadily decreasing in Georgia; from 4.1 per 100,000 in 2006 to 2.0 per 100,000 in 2010. From 2006-2010, 117 children in Georgia under 5 years of age were diagnosed with TB; 10 had TB meningitis, two had miliary or disseminated TB. These cases might have been prevented with early detection and treatment of the infection.