

**County of Moore**  
**Department of Health**  
**705 Pinehurst Avenue • P.O. Box 279**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 19, 2010**

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***Tuberculosis Elimination: Together We Can!***  
**World Tuberculosis Day is March 24**

Although tuberculosis (TB) is both treatable and preventable, it is still one of the leading causes of death from infectious disease across the globe. It affects people not only in isolated, poor communities or in far-off countries, but also right here in Moore County and other communities across the state. That is why North Carolina is observing World Tuberculosis Day on March 24.

"Tuberculosis is a serious disease that can have devastating consequences for individuals, their families, and society", according to Patty Kempton, Communicable Disease/Tuberculosis Nurse with the Moore County Health Department. "A person with active TB may easily infect people they spend time with. The Health Department works with individuals diagnosed with active TB to treat their disease and to help protect the individual's family, friends, and coworkers from infection. Treatment for active TB may last from six months to two years. The Health Department also offers treatment for individuals in our community who have been identified as having latent TB infections to prevent them from becoming sick with active TB."

Worldwide, 9.4 million new cases of TB were diagnosed and 1.8 million deaths were caused by TB in 2008. TB is also the leading cause of death among people with HIV. In the U.S., TB rates have been declining for 15 consecutive years and are now at an all-time low, but TB has not disappeared in this country. In 2008, more than 12,900 cases of TB disease were reported in the United States. While most cases of TB can still be successfully treated with antibiotics, the number of drug-resistant TB cases has been increasing.

***"To Protect and Promote Health through Prevention and Control of Disease and Injury."***  
<http://www.moorecountync.gov/health/>

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In North Carolina, 335 active cases of TB were reported in 2008, down slightly from 345 reported cases in 2007. North Carolina ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> in the U.S. in TB case rates in 2008. In Moore County, 9 cases of TB were reported from 2004-2008. In 2009, 2 cases of TB were reported.

TB is an airborne disease caused by the infectious agent *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. The germ primarily affects the lungs, but can also affect other organs. Once the TB germ is inside a person's body, the body's immune system can suppress its growth, resulting in inactive or latent TB infection, which does not make the person feel sick and cannot be spread to others. However, if not properly treated with a course of preventive antibiotics, TB infection can develop into active TB disease later in life.

When a person with active TB disease sneezes or coughs, TB bacteria are released into the air. Another person breathing in the bacteria may then develop TB infection. A simple tuberculin skin test (sometimes called a PPD test) can help diagnose TB infection or disease. Untreated, a person with active TB infects an average of 10 to 15 other people a year.

The Moore County Health Department and the North Carolina Public Health TB Control Program work together to rapidly identify and treat people with TB in our community, and to prevent new transmission of disease. With appropriate public health intervention and management, TB can be cured through treatment and medication, and spread of the disease to other people can be halted.

World TB Day commemorates the 1882 announcement of Dr. Robert Koch's discovery of the TB bacillus, the germ that causes TB. For more information about TB, see the North Carolina TB Control Program's web site at [www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/tb](http://www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/tb) or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's web site at [www.cdc.gov/tb](http://www.cdc.gov/tb).

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