

New School TB Screening Policy

Effective July 1, 2012, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) has rescinded the universal TB testing requirement for children entering kindergarten or a California school for the first time. Instead, universal TB screening and risk-based testing has been incorporated into the existing CA State physical examination requirement for children entering first grade. Health providers, as part of this routine health assessment, will screen students and test them for TB only if a risk factor is present.

This screening policy had been updated in order to promote evidence-based best practice, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF). False positive children will no longer have to endure lengthy preventive treatment regimens that may be harmful to their livers. This new policy prevents redundancy by folding a universal TB screening and targeted testing protocol into an existing framework, the first grade school entry physical examination. It also promotes comprehensive care by focusing on placing children in medical homes. Finally, this new policy enables a shift in focus on interventions better suited to finding TB cases, such as contact investigations, as well as on populations at higher risk for TB, such as the homeless and HIV positive.

Please note that this policy change will not affect pre-school children, teachers, or volunteers