



August 16, 2016

For Release

Media Availability Today: Representatives from Public Health, UW Medicine and SCCA will be available Tuesday, August 16 at 1 p.m. Come to UW Medicine South Lake Union campus, 850 Republican Street, Bldg. C, Orin Smith Auditorium. Contact: Susan Gregg, 206.616.6730. No interviews are taking place prior to the press conference.

UW Medical Center and SCCA statement on individual oncology healthcare worker diagnosed with tuberculosis

Seattle – UW Medical Center (UWMC) and Seattle Cancer Care Alliance (SCCA) are confirming that an oncology healthcare worker, who came into contact with cancer patients between February and July 2016, has tested positive for active tuberculosis (TB). While we believe the risk of transmission from this health care worker is low, we are taking every step possible in collaboration with Public Health – Seattle & King County to minimize any risk to patients, family members, caregivers and staff.

Details of Case

Although TB is infectious, unlike the flu or other infections, it is not easily spread. While we believe the risk of transmission to cancer patients is low, we are contacting approximately 140 cancer patients by letter who may have interacted with the health care worker to offer TB testing at no charge. SCCA is also contacting the patients' health care providers to ensure they are aware of this situation.

As a resource to patients, family members, caregivers and staff, we have established a Nurse Call Line at 1.855.520.8600 to answer questions.

In addition to testing patients, staff members who may have worked in close proximity to the health care worker have been tested. All of the health care worker's co-workers have tested negative for TB to date.

Among the healthcare worker's close contacts, only one has come back positive for latent (not active) TB infection. This is a health care worker who does not provide direct patient care and is not at UWMC/SCCA. This individual had significant exposure to the person with TB disease. However, this individual also had other risk factors for TB, including spending time in a part of the world where TB is common. We are not certain that the positive test is related to exposure to this case.

Taking into account all the available clinical information and the contact evaluation, we believe the risk of TB spread from the health care worker to others, including patients, is low.

More Details

After the health care worker proactively informed UWMC and SCCA of possible infection, both organizations contacted Public Health – Seattle & King County. The organizations are working in partnership and believe the risk of transmission to be low. The healthcare worker is on medical leave and responding well to treatment.

UW Medicine and SCCA are committed to ensuring the well-being and safety of our patients, family members, caregivers and staff.

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Public Health – Seattle & King County
<https://publichealthinsider.com>