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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 20, 2004**

**TUBERCULOSIS CASE IN YONKERS HIGH SCHOOL  
Health Department to Test Students Free of Charge**

The Westchester County Department of Health today announced that it is estimated that approximately 100 students and staff are to be tested for tuberculosis after exposure to a person with a newly discovered active case of tuberculosis. The Health Department staff will provide this skin testing for tuberculosis free of charge on-site for students and staff of the Yonkers High School located in Yonkers. They will return in three months to conduct repeat testing.

“The Health Department staff has worked closely with the administration of the Yonkers High School from the first day of the individual’s diagnosis,” stated Dr. Joshua Lipsman, Commissioner of Health. “Our joint investigation quickly identified those students and staff that would benefit from preventive testing and preventive treatment. At this stage of the investigation, we do not know where the individual contracted tuberculosis.”

The name and other identifying information about the individual are not being released to maintain the individual’s privacy. Despite the relatively low risk that students or staff might have been infected, in order to protect the students’ and staff’s health, the Health Department recommends that the students and staff who shared a classroom or otherwise had significant contact with the individual undergo skin testing for tuberculosis to determine if they may have been exposed to tuberculosis and could benefit from preventive treatment.

Angelo Petrone, Superintendent of Yonkers Public Schools, has informed the parents of those students and staff that have potentially shared a classroom with the infected individual through a letter mailed home on

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April 20, 2004 that advises them to get their children or themselves skin tested for tuberculosis. Parents and staff may choose to get their children skin tested at their own doctors or they may utilize the free-of-charge skin testing services that are being arranged by the Westchester County Department of Health. Anyone testing negative will need to repeat the testing in about three months.

“The safety and welfare of the children is always first and foremost in our minds,” said Angelo Petrone, Yonkers Public Schools Superintendent. “I am pleased that the Health Department is available to assist us in providing the skin testing at no charge. Having this testing available on-site is vital to the parents and ensures them that we are making the health of their children our top priority.”

Tuberculosis is a bacterial infection of the lungs that usually causes cough and fever. It is spread through the air from a sick, infectious person to others. A long period of close contact (many hours or days) with a person with tuberculosis disease is generally required for tuberculosis to be transmitted. Tuberculosis is tested for by using a simple skin test. This positive result indicates that the individual has been exposed to the tuberculosis germ and is not currently sick, but may become sick with tuberculosis disease if not treated. Someone can have a positive skin test and not be sick or able to spread the disease. If an individual has a positive skin test, preventive treatment is sometimes necessary to stop the infection from progressing into tuberculosis disease. Tuberculosis is a potentially deadly disease if left untreated. The preventive treatment is daily medication taken for a period of a number of months. Approximately 60-70 cases of tuberculosis are seen annually in Westchester County.

For more information on tuberculosis, contact the Westchester County Department of Health at 914-813-5000 or visit the website at [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health).