



September 12, 2013

Dear Human Services Provider:

As you may know, there is a nationwide shortage of tuberculin skin test antigens which is expected to continue for an undetermined period. This shortage has the potential to lead to regulatory noncompliance for those providers required by regulation to obtain them.

If every effort has been made to obtain a tuberculin skin test as required by the regulatory chapter that governs your facility, but the test could not be obtained due to the shortage of testing materials, the Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Human Services Licensing (Department) will not cite a regulatory violation provided you are able to document your attempts to obtain the required testing. The Department will reevaluate its position in this matter on December 31, 2013 based on the availability of the necessary antigens at that time.

The Department recommends that facilities with limited access to tuberculin skin test antigens use them for staff and individuals who are at increased risk of contracting tuberculosis (TB), including:

- Those who have had close contact with a person with infectious TB disease.
- Those who have emigrated from areas of the world with high rates of TB.
- Groups with high rates of TB transmission, such as homeless persons and injection drug users.
- Those who have worked or resided with people who are at high risk for TB.
- Persons with medical conditions that weaken the immune system such as HIV infection, substance abuse, silicosis, diabetes mellitus, severe kidney disease, low body weight, organ transplants, head and neck cancer, treatments such as corticosteroids, and specialized treatment for rheumatoid arthritis and Crohn's disease.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact the Bureau of Human Services Licensing's Provider Support Center at 1-866-503-3926 or ra-pwarlheadquarters@state.pa.us.

Thank you for your continued partnership in the care of our Commonwealth's most vulnerable citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ronald Melusky". The signature is fluid and extends across the width of the page.

Ronald Melusky
Director