

Tuberculosis Among Texans Experiencing Homelessness

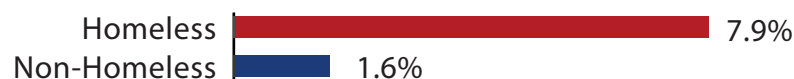
What is Tuberculosis?

- Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by a bacterium called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. The bacteria usually attack the lungs, but can also attack any part of the body. **TB is potentially deadly, but treatable.**
- People with TB disease are sick from active TB germs. They usually have symptoms and can spread TB germs to others through coughing, speaking, or singing.
- People with TB infection cannot spread TB germs to others, but can progress to TB disease. There are recommended treatments available for those with TB infection to prevent the progression to active disease.

Impact of TB on Texans Experiencing Homelessness

- The estimated rate of TB disease for Texans experiencing homelessness is **77 times higher** than the rate of TB disease among Texans overall.
- The proportion of TB related deaths among TB cases experiencing homelessness is approximately **5 times higher** than the proportion of deaths among cases that are not.

Percentage of Deaths Among TB Cases, Texas, 2015



- People experiencing homelessness are approximately 2 times more likely to not complete treatment.

Percentage of Incomplete TB Treatment, Texas, 2015



- Not completing full treatment can result in drug resistance, spread of TB, increased costs, and death.



Contributing factors to the spread of TB



What can homeless shelters do to prevent TB?

• Develop a plan

- Engage with health departments and local partners to develop a TB prevention and elimination plan that fits the facility. This plan should include:
 - Symptoms screenings for clients on intake
 - TB testing using tuberculin skin test or TB blood test
 - Referral for medical evaluation and TB treatment when recommended
 - TB education for facility staff and clients
- Work with support network to develop and implement strategies to meet goals of TB prevention plan. Example strategies include:
 - Dedicating staff to TB elimination efforts
 - Posting educational signage around the facility
 - Using a TB clearance card system for clients
 - Implementing a bed log and cough alert sheet
 - Using incentives for treatment completion such as housing and food support

• Raise awareness

- Engage with other community partners serving the homeless community.
- Report TB concerns to local health departments.

• Update and review the plan as needed

Frequent relocations and lack of stable address make treatment completion difficult

Homeless shelters can be crowded and poorly ventilated contributing to the spread of TB

Comorbidities such as HIV and substance abuse, make people more likely to become sick

People experiencing homelessness diagnosed with TB are 4 times more likely to be HIV positive, compared to non-homeless TB cases

People experiencing homelessness may wait longer to seek care, or have inconsistent access to healthcare

DSHS TB/HIV/STD Section

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My local health department TB contact is:



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