

Health Unit Media Release



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World TB Day Frontline TB Care Providers: Heroes in the Fight Against Tuberculosis

March 24, 2005 is World TB Day. This is an opportunity for people around the world to raise awareness about the health threat presented by tuberculosis (TB). This day recognizes the efforts of all countries involved in fighting TB. There are more than 2 million TB related deaths each year.

TB day 2005 will recognize Frontline TB Care Providers: Heroes in the Fight Against Tuberculosis. Globally India is one of many countries that have a high number of TB cases. The Stop TB campaign sponsors World TB day by recognizing the significant contribution that frontline workers such as Prem Neelkanth are making to stop the spread of TB. In Prem's tiny village in India many of the men and women who are labourers do not have time to visit the hospital for treatment. Prem's food shop provides TB medicines to patients in his community. He states his shop is like a TB clinic, each patient has medication supplied by city health official and Prem makes sure that they take their medication. If someone misses a few doses he seeks them out and gives the medication. He is one of many front line workers who believe that it is his duty to make sure a TB patient in his town does not miss a single dose. This is known as Direct Observed Therapy (DOTS), it is recommended method for TB control around the world.

In your community frontline public health nurses are responsible for following a Tuberculosis Control Program mandated by the provincial government. All active and inactive TB cases are followed and our government provides medication at no cost. Patients who don't take their medication as directed can also receive DOTS program.

Regardless of where we live in the world there is a threat from TB. Working together to reduce transmission is the first step to eliminating the disease. TB can be cured, controlled and with diligent efforts and sufficient resources, could eventually be eliminated.

Reference: The Stop TB Partnership, World TB Day 2005 Briefing Note, retrieved from www.stoptb.org/worldtbdays05announcement.asp

The above information has been submitted as an article for World TB Day and is one of the many strategies that are being used locally to increase the awareness of Tuberculosis. The Leeds Grenville and Lanark Health Unit are mandated to provide education to both health care professionals and public on Tuberculosis infection and disease. Public health nurses also have an important role in preventing the transmission of tuberculosis disease.

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Education is being offered to practitioners in Leeds Grenville and Lanark in the form of written packages and through a lecture being offered April 20, 2005 by Dr. Wendy Wobeser, Queen's University. The use of Care Connect will provide an audio and visual link between Brockville General Hospital, Kemptville District Hospital, Perth & Smith Falls District Hospital, Carleton Place and District Hospital and Almonte General Hospital simultaneously allowing healthcare providers in the tri-county to participate in this education opportunity. The public in our community will also receive information on TB and travel and World TB Day through local media, cable television and a variety of newsletters.

Increasing the awareness of TB and providing information on the role that all healthcare providers can play will contribute to the global goal of controlling and eventually eliminating TB.

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