

Guideline:

The Role of Tuberculosis Services in NSW

The role of Tuberculosis (TB) Services is to implement specialised TB prevention and control activities across all NSW local health districts and specialty networks. This includes the provision of diagnostic and treatment services for persons with suspected or confirmed latent or active TB, as well as prevention, education, surveillance and consultancy services.

In metropolitan areas TB Services usually operate within dedicated Chest Clinics. In regional and rural settings, TB Services may operate within a hospital, community or population health setting, depending on local health system structures and service needs.

The objectives of TB Services are to:

- Reduce morbidity and mortality due to TB
- Reduce TB transmission in the community
- Minimise the development of drug-resistant TB.

These objectives will be met by implementing the following strategies:

TB Services

- Providing services that are free of charge, irrespective of residency status or Medicare eligibility
- Ensuring services are accessible and delivered in a culturally appropriate way, including the use of professional interpreters where required
- The implementation of services that are flexible and responsive to the needs of patients.

Early Diagnosis

- Early assessment of persons suspected of having TB
- Provision of expert TB diagnostic care and facilities
- Implementing screening programs for groups and individuals identified to be at increased risk of TB.

Treatment and Management

- Safe and effective TB treatment that minimises the risk of drug resistance is provided in accordance with relevant guidelines
- The provision of directly observed treatment for all clients receiving curative TB treatment
- Adverse reactions to anti-tuberculosis drugs are reported and identified promptly and managed appropriately.

Prevention

- Ensuring appropriate standards of infection control for preventing transmission of TB within healthcare settings are maintained
- Provide effective diagnostic and treatment services for latent TB infection
- Provision of BCG vaccination.

Contact Tracing and Screening

- Planning contact tracing investigations in consultation with the TB Coordinator and where relevant, the public health unit and NSW TB Program Manager
- Implementing timely and rigorous contact tracing investigations in response to newly diagnosed cases of TB
- Evaluating contact screening activity.

Screening high-risk groups

- Provide screening for active and latent TB infection for healthcare workers, persons commencing immunosuppressive therapies, migrants from high TB incidence countries, and others as per relevant policies and guidelines.

Surveillance and Monitoring

- Collect timely, accurate and complete TB disease surveillance data for the purposes of local, state, national and international reporting
- Maintain a strong collaborative relationship with the local health district TB Coordinator and public health unit to monitor and report on the local epidemiology of TB
- Work with the TB Coordinator and NSW TB Program Manager to identify groups within the local population at increased risk of TB.

Policies

- In collaboration with the TB Coordinator, contribute to the development of local TB policy and practice guidelines

- Participate in the development and review of state and national policies that are consistent with the aim of reducing the incidence of TB in the local health district and in NSW.

Education

- Provide education and training to healthcare workers, the community and other stakeholders on all aspects of the prevention and control of TB.

Research

- Support operational research relating to TB, to inform local, state and national policy and practice.