Recurrent Nationwide Shortage of Tuberculin Skin Test Antigen Solutions: CDC Recommendations for Patient Care and Public Health Practice

September 04, 2013

On September 4, 2013 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued an updated HAN Alert regarding a nationwide shortage of tuberculin skin test antigens. The full HAN is available at CDC HAN Alert 5-4-2013.

The Iowa TB Control Program does not supply Aplisol or Tubersol to private health care providers. Questions regarding product availability should be directed to normal manufacturing/distribution contacts. Questions on the clinical management of LTBI or TB disease should be directed to the Program at 515-281-8636 or 515-281-7504.

Private health care providers should follow the general recommendations of the HAN with regards to TB screening. As stated in the HAN, Interferon-Gamma Release Assays (IGRAs) are an alternative to the use of tuberculin skin tests (TSTs). IGRAs are available thru private labs as well as the State Hygienic Laboratory (SHL). Clinicians/clinics intending to use IGRAs thru SHL should contact SHL at 319-335-4275 to obtain kits and training on proper collection and submission.

Recommendations for compliance with TB Screening and testing of health care workers and residents of Iowa licensed substance abuse facilities, hospitals and health care facilities during the nationwide shortage of tuberculin skin test antigens:

- Test only new HCWs/residents per rules
- For facilities classified as low risk (see TB Risk Assessment – Hospitals and Healthcare Facilities or Substance Abuse Facilities), do not test HCWs/residents as part of a serial testing program as this is no longer required
- If unable to test new HCWs/residents with TST due to shortage, consider using IGRAs to test
- Avoid performing a TST and an IGRA on the same HCW due to possible boosting of IGRA test result by the TST and other inconclusive test results between the TST and IGRA
- If IGRAs are not feasible, continue to perform sign/symptom review of new HCWs/residents as described in rules
- Document reason why the new HCW/resident was not tested and place on a callback list to test as soon as possible - in order of date of hire/admission
- HCWs/residents in this category are allowed to work/be admitted
- HCWs/residents placed on callback list must be tested as soon as product is available