

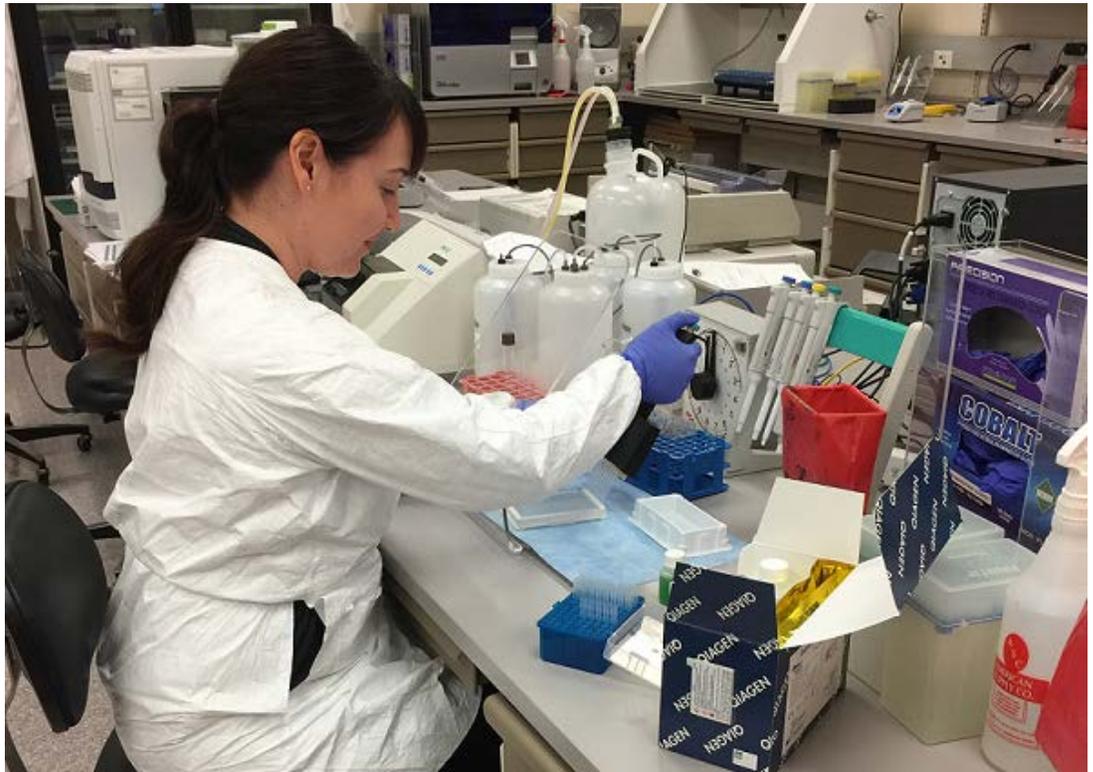


COUNTY OF MONTEREY CAO Weekly Report

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- > WRA monitors waterways during storms

SPECIALREPORT



Rawni Lunsford, Public Health Microbiologist, performing the QuantiFERON TB screening test at the Health Department Laboratory.

County Notes

- > There is still time to sign up for the public access defibrillator training at the Government Center February 17th. Details are [here](#).

Health Detectives Track TB

They are the Sherlock Holmes of Public Health - members of the Health Department's Division of Communicable Disease Prevention and Control. Their latest mystery? The Case of the Courtroom Contact.

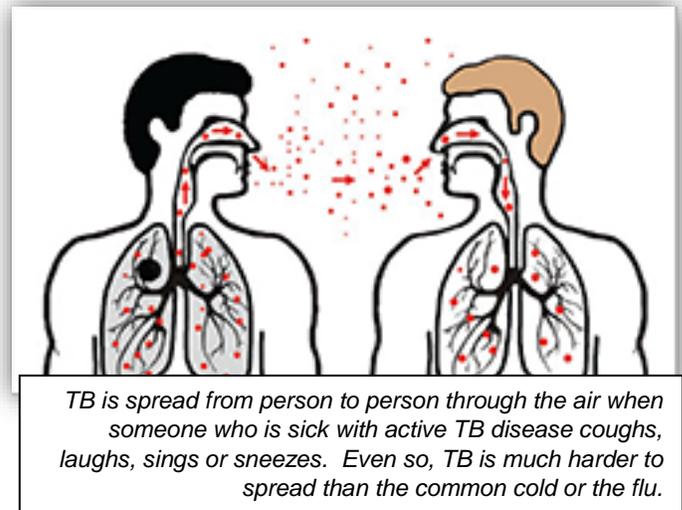
A disease investigation took a surprising turn last month, with the Health Department making a public announcement looking for residents who may

have been in a Monterey County courtroom in Salinas at the same time as someone with active tuberculosis or TB.

In an abundance of caution, the Health Department did thorough outreach not only to the public, but to court and county employees who ran the risk of exposure such as the Monterey County Superior Court, Public Defender's Office, District Attorney's Office and Sheriff's Office to encourage people who were in the courtroom at that certain time to be tested for TB and is offering free TB screenings.

This is all in a day's work for the Division of Communicable Disease Prevention and Control.

Epidemiologist & Program Manager Kristy Michie explains how disease investigations are conducted and how the department assists those who may be affected.



Q. How often does the Health Department investigate an exposure to a contagious disease?

A. The Health Department's Division of Communicable Disease Prevention and Control investigates exposures to contagious diseases every day. The Division investigates exposures to diseases such as pertussis (whooping cough), tuberculosis (TB), legionellosis (Legionnaire's Disease), salmonella, *E. coli*, syphilis, meningococcal disease, and Zika virus. Most contact investigations are relatively small, involving 10 individuals on average. However, contact investigations can be very large, involving hundreds of individuals exposed at numerous locations, over extended periods of time.

Q. How is a disease investigation conducted?

A. Disease investigations are an important part of public health. They help to identify the source of infections and prevent the spread of disease to other people. Disease investigations usually begin when a health care provider or laboratory reports to the local Health Officer that they know of an individual with an illness that must be reported by law. An investigator is assigned to conduct an extensive interview with the ill individual. Through this interview process, other individuals who may be exposed are identified. County Environmental Health and Public Health Laboratory employees collect and test specimens to determine the source of illness. Investigators insure that the ill individual receives appropriate treatment, and that other people that were exposed are screened for illness and are offered appropriate treatment.

Q. What patient confidentiality issues are involved?

A. All Health Department staff are required to comply with federal and state laws governing protected health information and personally identifying information. Disease investigations

must be conducted in a way that reduces the chance that an ill individual will be identified. The Health Department only shares information necessary to protect the general public.

Q. In this recent TB case, the potential exposure was months ago. Why are screenings still needed?

A. Some communicable diseases like TB have long incubation periods. An incubation period is the time from which an individual is exposed until he or she becomes sick. It may be many months or even years before a person who is exposed to TB germs becomes sick with active TB disease. In the recent case of TB, individuals that were exposed were offered screenings to see if they have been infected with the TB bacteria. If an individual is found to be infected, they can be treated with antibiotics to help prevent them from becoming sick with TB later in their lifetime.

Did you know there is a vaccine for TB is given in many countries but not in the United States? While it safeguards infants and young children from TB meningitis (TB of the brain) it does not prevent primary TB.

The Health Department has a [TB Control Unit](#) which focuses on preventing the spread of the disease and making sure TB does not become the public health threat it once was. This current investigation may take many months to complete, but it is all in the effort to keep the public safe and well.



NMC Celebrates Trauma Center 2nd Anniversary

How time flies when you are growing the county's first Level II Trauma Center. Natividad Medical Center is celebrating the second anniversary of its trauma center designation and the positive impact it has had on the community and hospital staff.

A Level II designation means that essential specialists, physicians and equipment are available 24 hours a day to care for trauma patients. Receiving treatment at a trauma center lowers risk of death by 25 percent.

Since its designation in January of 2015, the NMC Trauma Center has increased its annual patient volume from 1,375 in 2015 to 1,522 in 2016, and those patients have given the hospital valuable information.

"We've identified that most traumas can be attributed to motor vehicle crashes, falls and assaults," says hospital CEO Gary Gray. "We have been able to develop specialized services to better treat these patients and prevent injury."

In the first year of the designation, NMC launched and expanded many programs. The second year says Gray, both programs and employees matured.



“The changes that came with the designation became more a part of hospital culture,” explains Gray. “We began to reap the benefits of staff training and replaced traveling or temporary staff with permanent employees. That can be described as the ‘halo’ effect of the designation, the changes and improvements elevated the overall satisfaction of our staff.”

A few other highlights of the second year include:

- Establishing a dialysis service to treat critically ill patients with acute kidney injury in the intensive care unit
- Training more than 55 physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners from around the country in Advanced Trauma Life Support
- In partnership with Sun Street Centers, bringing an award-winning teen safe driving program In One Instant to local high schools
- Introducing BrainSmart™, a trauma prevention program designed to educate youth, seniors and caregivers about head trauma, including concussions and falls
- Starting a CHOICE Program support group for family members of patients who have been victims of assault

The second year also had a significant effect on something Natividad is already known for – teaching.

“There was a ripple effect in the professional community which began the first year with the news we were now a Level II Trauma Center,” says Chief Medical Officer Dr. Craig Walls. “In the second year, we began to see what that tide brought back to the hospital – doctors who wanted to work here, not just in the trauma arena, but because of our reputation and growth. We have doctors from around the nation and world coming to learn advance lifesaving techniques. Trauma is a small community, trauma doctors all know each other. Now they know Natividad.”

Water Resources Agency Role in Storm Safety Efforts

The agency name should give you a hint – the Water Resources Agency (WRA) has been playing an important part in safety and protection during our recent storms.

WRA’s primary function is to manage, protect, store and conserve water resources in Monterey

County. That task takes on special meaning during times like this, when we are seeing an overabundance of rain.

As part of efforts to safeguard life and property and minimize possible flooding along the Salinas River, agency workers are carefully managing releases from the Nacimiento Reservoir, which is at 85% capacity now after many years of drought. It's a delicate and calculated process.



The Salinas River passes by the San Ardo oil fields this week. Photo by Sgt. Michael Darrington.

“We must make room in the reservoir for water from the storms, so we are timing the releases from Nacimiento Reservoir between peak river flows in the Salinas River,” explains WRA Deputy General Manager Robert Johnson. “We must be very diligent, since flows in the Salinas River are higher than they have been in a while.”

Releases from the reservoir can range from flood control releases, which vary in magnitude depending on weather and reservoir conditions to minimum fish flows. Currently the WRA is releasing between 4,400 cubic feet per second (cfs) and 400 cfs based on reservoir and river conditions. How much is a cfs? Johnson has an imaginative way to describe it.

“Think of a cubic foot as a basketball,” he explains. “Imagine yourself on the bank of a river looking straight across the channel. Now imagine (with a release of 4,400 cfs) 4,400 basketballs passing by you in one second, every second.”

If you would like to check out information about reservoir releases, you can find daily reservoir and dam data [here](#).

The Salinas River is not the only river affected by the recent storms. Agency staff is monitoring river levels throughout the county, including the Carmel River and the county's portion of the Pajaro River; both river systems saw some very high levels last month.



Remote rainfall and river level monitor.

To do that, WRA has a real-time flood warning system which lets the agency provide hydrologic data to emergency managers, local law enforcement and the National Weather Service any hour of the day or night.

The system consists of approximately 50 remote sites located throughout the major watersheds which measure rainfall, water level and air temperature.