



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Aging and Long-Term Support Administration
PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-5600

June 21, 2019
Amended August 16, 2019

AL TSA: ALF #2019-009
NATIONWIDE SHORTAGE OF TUBERCULIN SKIN TEST ANTIGEN SOLUTION

Dear Assisted Living Facility Administrator:

UPDATE: The nationwide shortage now includes TUBERSOL® (PPD) tuberculin skin test antigen. Recommendations in this letter are applicable to the shortage of both APLISOL® and TUBERSOL®.

On June 6, 2019, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a [Health Advisory](#) about an expected shortage of APLISOL®. APLISOL® is one of two purified-protein derivative (PPD) tuberculin antigens that are licensed by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in performing tuberculin skin tests. The manufacturer reported that a shortage of APLISOL® 5 mL (50 tests) is expected in June 2019, followed by a supply interruption of APLISOL® 1 mL (10 tests) in November 2019. The manufacturer estimates the shortage will last three to ten months, but warns the timeframe is subject to change.

An interferon-gamma release assay (IGRA) blood test is available to test for tuberculosis (TB).

While the shortage is ongoing and supply is difficult to obtain, the Department of Health (DOH) recommends following CDC guidelines in the health alert for TB testing. Please refer to the [Health Advisory](#) for more information about these options.

- Substitute IGRA blood tests for TSTs
- Prioritize allocation of TSTs, in consultation with state and local public health authorities. CDC recommends testing only for persons who are at risk of TB.

State regulations require testing at hire for employees. If, due to the shortage, the facility cannot perform the required testing for all employees, employees identified to be at risk for TB must be tested. When the TUBERSOL® and APLISOL® shortage eases, facilities will be responsible to come into compliance with TB testing regulations, and assure all required employees are tested. This includes employees the facility deferred testing due to the shortage.

High-risk groups for TB infection include:

- People who were recently exposed to persons with TB disease;
- People born in, or who frequently travel to, countries where TB disease is common. The CDC considers TB to be common in all countries **other than** Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United States, and those in western or northern Europe;
- People who currently or used to live in large group settings, such as homeless shelters or correctional facilities;
- People with weaker immune systems, such as those with certain health conditions or taking certain medications that may alter immunity; and
- Children, especially those under age five, if they are in one of the risk groups noted above.

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The following links are available on the [ALTSA Assisted Living Facility Professionals webpage](#) under "Tuberculosis Resources:"

- DOH TB Risk Assessment and Questionnaire
- DOH TB Resources and Updates
- CDC information on Interferon Gamma Release Assays
- CDC information on Testing and Diagnosis

Additional resources:

- CDC and the National Tuberculosis Controllers Association [updated TB testing, screening and treatment recommendations](#) (May 2019).
- DOH publishes a TB newsletter that provides information on shortages, changes in recommendations and educational opportunities; [Sign up to receive the free newsletter](#)

Thank you for your continued commitment to resident health and safety. If you have any questions about the shortage of TB testing solutions related to inspection/complaint investigation issues, please contact your RCS Field Manager.

Sincerely,



Candace Goehring, Director
Residential Care Services

DSHS: "Transforming Lives"