

**CITY OF BALTIMORE**

SHEILA DIXON, Mayor



**HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Health Department Recognizes World TB Day**

BALTIMORE, MD- (March 24, 2008)- March 24<sup>th</sup> marks World TB Day, a day that highlights the global threat of tuberculosis. Although Baltimore City, like most of the United States, has low rates of TB, World TB Day is designed to make the public aware that tuberculosis remains a serious problem in much of the world.

Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease that is spread from person-to-person through the air. TB is curable and preventable. When a person sick with TB coughs, another person may breathe in the TB bacteria and, in some cases, subsequently become sick and infectious to others. Symptoms of TB can include a persistent, productive cough of several weeks, fatigue, fever, night sweats, and/or weight loss. Since TB is spread through the air, breathing is the only risk factor for becoming infected.

TB illness is curable with antibiotics; antibiotics can usually cure the individual and prevent transmission to others. TB illness is preventable; people who have breathed in the TB bacteria but who are not yet ill can take an antibiotic in order to prevent the development of active TB disease.

In 2007, the number of reported TB cases in Baltimore city was 47, with an incidence rate of 7.4 per 100,000. This is an increase from 2006, when the number of reported TB cases was 34 and the TB case rate was 5.4 per 100,000.

Although the number of TB cases fluctuates from year to year, Baltimore City's general trend is downward. Today, there is continued success of TB control in Baltimore City due to an aggressive TB Control Program with a dedicated and hard-working staff. Our goals are prompt identification of persons with clinically active TB, appropriate treatment of all TB Cases, prompt identification and screening of TB contacts, appropriate provision of treatment of latent TB infection to high-risk reactors, and targeted testing and treatment of latent TB infection to high-risk populations.

The Baltimore City Health Department's TB Control Program will display a timeline that depicts milestones in Baltimore and Maryland TB history during the last 100 years. The timeline will be displayed at 210 Guilford Avenue, beginning on Friday, March 28. It is available online at [www.baltimorehealth.org/info/WorldTBDAYTimeline.pdf](http://www.baltimorehealth.org/info/WorldTBDAYTimeline.pdf).

For more information about clinical services and World TB Day activities, you can contact Sherry Johnson Ketemepi, TB program manager at 410-396-9413 or view our website at [www.baltimorehealth.org/tb](http://www.baltimorehealth.org/tb).

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