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Excellent health and care for everyone,
everywhere, every time.



February 6, 2024

To: Community Health Service Providers

RE: Changes to Nontuberculous Mycobacteria (NTM) Services in Island Health

Island Health Tuberculosis (TB) services is working to meet high demand due to the growing number of TB infections and active TB cases on Vancouver Island. Specifically, TB rates have increased significantly from 2021 to 2023 (up 57% compared to the previous five years). Therefore, to adequately address immediate public health needs, the capacity of our TB services needs to be re-directed to the highest public health priorities of TB case management, contact tracing and community screening. While previously, Island Health TB and Public Health services were able to provide nontuberculous mycobacteria (NTM) medication support for some patients as an auxiliary, non-Public Health function, our ability to do this is now limited.

Therefore, Island Health needed to stop accepting NTM referrals for case management support, effective **October 18, 2023**, to allow the program to focus on its core public health mandate. Referrals received prior to this date were supported, however, referrals received on October 18 and beyond have been returned, and client support will need to be arranged and managed locally at the discretion of the referring provider. *NTM medications such as Rifampin and Ethambutol can still be obtained from the BCCDC via completion of the NTM Prescription Referral Form and submitting it to the Island TB Program.* This form is for prescription of medications only.

To access the necessary medication referral forms, please visit the [Island Health TB Program webpage](#), or contact the Island Health TB program by phone at (250) 519-1510.

Thank you for your understanding and your ongoing care for patients.

Regards,

Cheryl Newell
Regional Manager, Communicable Disease Programs

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