



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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## **PLASMA COLLECTION CENTER TB IS MULTI-DRUG RESISTANT STRAIN** *Strain is Treatable; HHSa, Center Working to Notify Clients, Staff*

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSa) is working with Life Sera Plasma Collection Center officials to notify clients and staff who may have been exposed to a multi-drug resistant strain of tuberculosis (TB). This case, at Life Sera Plasma Center in Hillcrest, was reported earlier this month by HHSa.

An individual who was at the Plasma Center (6<sup>th</sup> Ave location) from July 1, 2007 to Feb. 18, 2008, Sunday – Friday, has been confirmed to have a strain of TB that is resistant to two of the most commonly used drugs to treat the illness, Isoniazid and Rifampin. This form of TB is generally referred to as multi-drug resistant TB or MDR-TB.

“The treatment regimen for MDR-TB takes longer, because patients must take special drugs to cure the disease,” said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer. “We urge patients with TB to finish all of their TB medicine. Not completing the treatment regimen can result in the strain becoming multi-drug resistant.”

“Life Sera Plasma Collection Center is cooperating to the fullest extent possible with HHSa,” said a Life Sera spokesperson. “The Center strives to protect the health and welfare of its clients and staff, and supports the efforts of HHSa to promote public health.”

Tuberculosis is not uncommon in the San Diego region. In 2007, there were 280 total cases of TB in San Diego County and 28 have been reported so far in 2008. Each year, 1 – 2 percent of these overall cases are multi-drug resistant. A TB skin test is generally the first step in evaluating whether a person has been affected.

Clients are urged to see their personal physician. Individuals with no medical provider, or anyone who would like more information, may call the County TB Control Program at (619) 692-8621.

Symptoms of active TB include persistent cough, fever, night sweats and unexplained weight loss. Most people who are exposed to TB do not develop the disease.

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**Dr. Kathy Moser is available for interviews until 3:30 p.m. Call (619) 685-2239 for arrangements.**