Update to Recommendations Regarding Immune-Based Testing for Tuberculosis and Co-administration of the COVID-19 Vaccine

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TO: Health Alert Network
FROM: Alison V. Beam, JD, Acting Secretary of Health
SUBJECT: Update to Recommendations regarding Immune-Based Testing for Tuberculosis and Co-Administration of the COVID-19 vaccine
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SUMMARY

- Guidance released on August 31, 2021 from the CDC recommends that both the interferon gamma release assays (IGRAs) and the tuberculin skin test (TST) for tuberculosis (TB) can occur without regards to timing of COVID-19 vaccination. This guidance is an update to PA HAN 545.
- The prior recommendation of waiting 4 weeks from the final COVID-19 vaccination for immune-based TB testing is no longer recommended.
- Patients with active TB disease or being evaluated for possible active TB disease may receive COVID-19 vaccination.
- If you have any questions, please call PA DOH at 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258) or your local health department.

Background

When the COVID-19 vaccinations first received their initial emergency use authorization the recommendation regarding the COVID-19 vaccination and testing for tuberculosis (TB) stated that TB testing with either the interferon gamma release assays (IGRAs) or tuberculin skin test (TST) should occur either prior to administration of the COVID-19 vaccine or wait until 4 weeks after the final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. This was out of concern that the immune response...
generated by the COVID-19 vaccination would interfere with the result from the immune-based testing for tuberculosis. There were many logistical concerns with this recommendation especially in regard to the dual task of COVID-19 vaccination and the screening of health care workers and patients for TB.

On August 31, 2021 the CDC updated their special considerations for COVID-19 vaccination and announced that the COVID-19 vaccine and both the IGRA and TST tests for tuberculosis can be co-administered. There does not need to be a 4 week separation between them. This recommendation should streamline the health screening process and COVID-19 vaccinations for Healthcare workers and patients.

**Recommendations**

1- Clinicians and providers may co-administer COVID-19 vaccine and immune-based testing for TB. This is an update to PA HAN 545.
2- There does not need to be a 4 week separation between COVID-19 vaccination and immune-based testing for TB.
3- Patients with active TB disease or being evaluated for possible active TB disease can receive the COVID-19 vaccination.

If you have any questions, please call PA DOH at 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258) or your local health department.

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This information is current as of September 7, 2021 but may be modified in the future.