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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **MASSACHUSETTS ONLY STATE TO RECEIVE \$1.5 MILLION GRANT FOR GROUNDBREAKING INITIATIVE AGAINST TUBERCULOSIS**

*MA Department of Public Health partnering with Lynn Community Health Center to target latent TB*

The Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced \$1.5 million in grant funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop a first-in-the-nation treatment and prevention program for latent tuberculosis (TB), in partnership with the [Lynn Community Health Center](http://www.lchcnet.org) (LCHC).

The CDC awarded a single grant in the United States for this purpose, and selected Massachusetts to lead the effort. Funding will support a 3-year pilot program to create a comprehensive strategy against latent TB infection.

“We are pleased to lead this unique project in partnership with our colleagues at the Lynn Community Health Center,” said Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, MPH. “We hope this exciting new initiative represents an invaluable first step in eventually eliminating TB in our communities, improving the health of our residents, and reducing health care costs associated with treatment for TB infection.”

Current clinical practice focuses on treating active TB disease – a condition that is difficult and expensive to treat, can be spread through the air to others, and can be life-threatening. [Treatment of latent TB is seen as key](#) to eventually eradicating tuberculosis entirely. Nearly 13 million people in the United States live with latent TB infection. People with latent TB infection do not have symptoms and are not infectious; however left untreated, 5 to 10% of those infected will develop TB disease at some point in their lives.

The partnership between DPH and the Lynn Community Health Center focuses on supporting community engagement to address latent TB infection; reducing the stigma around TB, educating health care providers, community organizations and community members on advances in testing and treatment, and providing those services to latent TB patients at LCHC.

“In our role providing health care to among the state’s most vulnerable and underserved populations, we are in a unique position to provide these critical services for TB infection at the grass roots level,” said LCHC Infectious Disease Director Dr. Hanna Haptu. “We are delighted to work together with the Department of Public Health, the [Lynn Public Health Department](#) and our other community partners in this unprecedented collaboration.”

Globally, more people die from TB than any other infectious disease, and about one-third of the world’s population lives with latent TB infection. People born in countries where TB rates are high are at increased risk.

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