

New York City hospital worker had TB

March 16 2007

Hundreds of Bronx hospital patients, including infants, and their relatives were exposed to tuberculosis by a staffer, said New York City health officials.

The Health Department is tracking down anyone treated in the maternity, baby nursery, neonatal intensive care and psychiatric units of St. Barnabas Hospital between Nov. 1, 2006 and Jan. 24.

"This health care worker has a strain that ... responds to the most common tuberculosis medications," Dr. Sonal Munsiff, assistant commissioner for TB control at the city Health Department, told the New York Daily News. "This means we can give effective treatment to exposed people to prevent them from getting active TB."

The New York Post said the Health Department and the hospital went public with its search for patients because they had not been able to reach many of them. Of 571 patients or family members initially identified and contacted by mail -- including 238 infants - only 260 have been tested, the Post reported.

Three adults and no infants have tested positive for tuberculosis exposure, but not active TB, the Post said.

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