



AMERICAN RESPIRATORY ALLIANCE
of WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

We're All About Breathing

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TB Arms Reach Across the Country **See-and-Touch Artificial TB Testing Arms are an exclusive item of the** **American Respiratory Alliance**

Pittsburgh, PA – March 19, 2009– In the past 18 months, the American Respiratory Alliance of Western Pennsylvania (ARA), a charitable organization working to control and prevent lung diseases, has distributed hundreds of “See-and-Touch” Mantoux TB skin testing artificial arms to places like the South Dakota Department of Health, Arkansas Children’s Hospital, Texas Children’s Pediatric Hospital, the Sheriff’s Department of San Diego, Scripps Memorial Hospital and as far away as Saskatchewan, Canada.

World TB Day (March 24, 2009) would be a good time to ask why! The answer is that TB is still a problem in the United States, and the American Respiratory Alliance has an exclusive educational tool to help eliminate and treat TB available right here in Pittsburgh.

One third of the world’s population is infected with TB. Stronger, drug-resistant strains of TB are developing every year and, according to the CDC, 13,779 TB cases were reported from the 50 states and the District of Columbia (DC) in 2006.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health reports that tuberculosis continues to be a significant public health problem throughout Pennsylvania. In 2006, a total of 337 cases of TB were reported, representing a 3.7 percent increase from 2005. Of those, 22 cases (6.5 percent) were drug resistant and virtually untreatable. Allegheny County reported 24 cases of TB and the entire service area for the American Respiratory Alliance (Southwest and Northwest Pennsylvania) reported a total of 50 cases.

The ARA’s “See-and-Touch TB Arms” provide an opportunity for health professionals to learn to administer, read and interpret the Mantoux tuberculin skin test, which is the test of choice for detecting TB infection. Made of sturdy resin, the “See-and-Touch TB Arms” provide a “hands-on” method to recognize TB skin test reactions both by sight and by touch.

Results of the Mantoux Skin Test are measured by the swelling and redness at the injection site. These artificial arms, which are available in different skin tones (Caucasian, African American, Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander), have various, realistic reactions on the forearm, which provide a unique opportunity for problem solving.

The Mantoux Skin Test, a test used to identify individuals who have previously been infected with TB, is one of the two major TB skin tests used in the world, and is endorsed by the American Thoracic Society and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The American Respiratory Alliance of Western Pennsylvania is ***dedicated to the prevention and control of lung disease through education, training, direct services, research funding, and advocacy***. For more information on TB and the TB resources offered by the American Respiratory Alliance, please visit www.healthylungs.org or call 1-800-220-1990.