

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 24, 2001

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER^s

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 32: REQUEST FOR A FULL-TIME PUBLIC CASE AIDE (OUTREACH WORKER) POSITION FOR TUBERCULOSIS OUTREACH (COUNCILMAN EUILLE'S REQUEST)

In response to Councilman Euille's inquiry, the following information is provided on the Health Department request for a Tuberculosis Outreach position. Tuberculosis cases in the City of Alexandria between calendar years 1996 and 1999 increased from a case rate of 4.3 (total number of cases treated in 1996 was 5) per 100,000 population to a case rate of 20.3 (total number of cases treated in 1999 was 24) per 100,000 population. However, in 2000 the case rate dropped to 11.7 per 100,000 population (total number of cases treated in 2000 was 15). Attachment I charts this data along with that of four other Northern Virginia localities.

It is noted by the U.S. Center for Disease Control that Tuberculosis incidence is prevalent where TB and Human Immunodeficiency (HIV) virus epidemics overlap and where new immigrants from countries with high rates of TB tend to settle. According to the City's Health Department, 75 percent of TB cases are foreign born.

According to the Department, currently there are 15 TB cases in the City with nine more in the "TB Suspect" (patients that have tested positive for exposure to the disease but have not yet developed it) category. In addition, each case has multiple contacts who must be tested. An average of 400 people are followed-up and treated for latent TB infection each year in an effort to prevent the development of the disease in the population. Those with latent TB infections are not communicable but need to be treated to prevent development of the disease in the future.

The standard care for TB patients, according to the Health Department, requires that each case receives Direct Observed Therapy (DOT), through frequent visits to the patients' homes and making sure that recommended doses of medication are adhered to. Patients receive DOT for six to 24 months, depending on the circumstances.

In 2000, a Case Aide followed-up more than 12 cases weekly. With about 75% of TB patients in the City being foreign-born, much of the work is conducted in a language other than English or with people for whom English is not their primary language. The Case Aide, besides working with individual patients, also works with small groups providing TB prevention education and other forms of wellness recommendations. If the Case Aide is on vacation or indisposed, service (including DOT) is provided by a nurse. Decreased State and federal funding has led to a loss of 1.6 State Outreach workers in the past year. Presently the Health Department has one Public Health Case Aide providing needed services.

The request of funding in the FY 2002 budget for a full-time Public Health Case Aide (\$34,430) was not seen as critical as four other Health Department supplemental budget requests (totaling \$197,049) that were recommended for funding in FY 2002. The lower prioritization of the Public Health Case Aide was due to a decline in TB caseload.. If, during the course of FY 2002, caseloads increase to the point that adding this Case Aide is warranted, then this request for funding will be revisited.

Attachment

Number of Reported Tuberculosis Cases and Rates per 100,000 Virginia, 1996-2000

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LOCALITY	POP	1996		1997		1998		1999		2000	
		CASES	RATE								
ALEXANDRIA CITY DIST.	128283	5	4.3	18	15.4	19	16.3	24	20.3	15	11.7
ARLINGTON CO. DIST.	189453	32	18.2	29	16.5	29	16.5	29	16.4	32	16.9
FAIRFAX DISTRICT	969749	100	10.7	72	7.7	72	7.7	77	8.3	89	9.2
LOUDOUN DISTRICT	169599	2	2.0	7	7.0	5	5.0	4	2.8	4	2.4
PRINCE WILLIAM DIST.	280813	4	1.4	7	2.4	7	2.4	8	3.1	9	3.2
NORTHERN REGION	1737897	143	8.9	133	8.3	132	8.2	142	8.3	149	8.6
VIRGINIA	7078816	349	5.3	349	5.3	339	5.2	334	4.9	382	4.1

* population estimates based on US Census data; used to calculate 1999 and 2000 rates only. Prior year rates based on Virginia Employment Commission estimates. Current year estimates are displayed.