

TB and LTBI Among Micronesians

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Microneisian Islander Community

Who Are We?

Micronesia is a subregion of Oceania consisting of about 2,000 **small islands** in the Northwestern Pacific ocean.

Federated States of Micronesia is made up of 4 sister states: **Chuuk, Pohnpei, Yap, and Kosrae**. It also includes the **Republic of the Marshall Islands and Republic of Palau**.

How TB and LTBI Affects the Community

- It affects them psychologically and socially. TB patients will be **rejected by family and friends**. Sometimes they can lose their jobs.
- In the Micronesian community, TB patients are seen as damaged for life or **an outcast in the community**. The stigma in the community or society causes anxiety, depression and embarrassment.
- TB patients feel like their life is not worthy.

Which Population is Affected the Most by TB/LTBI?

- Within our Microneisian community, mostly Chuukese and Marshallese populations are affected the most by TB.
- The TB disease in person residing in the Marshallese and Chuukese community or homes has been **increasing since 2015**.
- In 2021, the TB disease among Marshallese and Chuukese was estimated at 52/100,000 population, a rate more than **25 times higher than that of Oregonians** as a whole.
- As recent as 2022, Oregon continues to see cases of TB disease among the Marshallese and Chuukese communities.

Why TB Spreads Among These Two Communities

As I mentioned earlier that in some communities or society once they are notified that they are a patient of TB, they will hide away instead of seeking help. Community members are lacking education on TB/LTBI.

From experiencing negative reactions from other community members, they are **ashamed to come forward and looking for help.**

That is why TB/LTBI spread among these communities.

How Have We Helped?

Reaching out to the Micronesian community is a challenge because of the culture. We have to find ways that we can help the community. Religion being a common factor;

- One way we help is by adding outreach to the church agenda, having 15 mins after mass to talk about TB/LTBI. We simplify it for them to understand and give them access to available resources.

Marion County Public Health helped us host a TB check. It was a success. We asked them to perform a physical exam, and obtain a chest x-ray.

- We provided resources such as:
 - Written translation in the perspective language, provide numbers and who to call for help.

Moments Captured From our Educational Outreaches



Lesson Learned

We learned a lot from our outreach and workshop among the Micronesian communities. We learn that **trust is the most important method** among the Micronesians.

Building and sustaining relationships are at the heart of organizing communities. The strength of a community lies in the strength of the connections that we have with each other. **With strong connections, people have the power to make real change.** It takes time to build the connections among communities but it's worth it.

Success and Challenge

Our success is educating our communities on TB/LTB. There is success because of the funding we use, We're **able to set up workshops**, give gift cards, and provide dinner to participants from the Micronesian community to thank them for joining us.

Even with the success we still have challenges that we face among our Micronesians communities. Knowing the population of Micronesians living in Salem is a lot but only between 25 to 30 people come to our events.

- **Barriers like no transportation, or busy with work**, and some members of the community simply **feel embarrassed to seek help**.

MIC Impact

MIC make a great impact on the community by reaching out to them and help. Provide workshop/outreach to the community. I can see changes among our community in a way that some of the community members are able to come out and ask for help. I can see that less ashamed among others because they started to understand what is TB.

They started to access health care and talked to other family members to encourage them to go checked for TB.

Thank You For Your
Time! :)

Microneisian Islander Community appreciate being funded by the TEA mini grant project. If we get any funding again, we are planning to reach out to the Microneisian Community living in Portland area.