

CIRCULAR OF INFORMATION TO PHYSICIANS REGARDING THE MEASURES
ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF HEALTH FOR THE PREVENTION
OF TUBERCULOSIS IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT,
CRIMINAL COURT BUILDING,
Centre, White, Elm and Franklin Streets.

NEW YORK, February 13, 1894.

The communicability of pulmonary tuberculosis has been so thoroughly established, and is now so generally recognized by the medical profession throughout the world, that the Board of Health of New York City has determined that the time has arrived when active steps should be taken, looking towards its prevention in this city. The Board has therefore resolved to adopt the following preliminary measures :

First—The Department will hereafter register the name, address, sex and age of every person suffering from tuberculosis in this city, so far as such information can be obtained, and respectfully requests that hereafter all physicians forward such information on the postal cards ordinarily employed for reporting cases of contagious diseases. This information will be solely for the use of the Department, and in no case will visits be made to such persons by the inspectors of the Department, nor will the Department assume any sanitary surveillance of such patients, unless the person resides in a tenement-house, boarding-house or hotel, or unless the attending physician requests that an inspection of the premises be made ; and in no case where the person resides in a tenement-house, boarding-house or hotel will any action be taken if the physician requests that no visits be made by inspectors, and is willing himself to deliver circulars of information, or furnish such equivalent information as is required to prevent the communication of the disease to others.

Second—Where the Department obtains knowledge of the existence of cases of pulmonary consumption residing in tenement-houses, boarding-houses or hotels (unless the case has been reported by a physician and he requests that no visits be made) inspectors will visit the premises and family, will leave circulars of information, and instruct the person suffering from consumption and the family as to the measures which should be taken to guard against the spread of the disease, and, if it is considered necessary, will make such recommendations for the cleansing or renovation of the apartment as may be required to render it free from infectious matter.

Third—In all cases where it comes to the knowledge of the Department that premises which have been occupied by a consumptive have been vacated by death or removal, an inspector will visit the premises and direct the removal of infected articles, such as carpets, rugs, bedding, etc., for disinfection, and will make such written recommendations to the Board as to the cleansing and renovation of the apartment as may be required. An order embodying these recommendations will then be issued to the owner of the premises, and compliance with this order will be enforced. No other persons than those there residing at the time will be allowed to occupy such apartments until the order of the Board has been complied with. Infected articles, such as carpets, rugs, etc., will be removed by the Department, disinfected and returned, without charge to the owner.

Fourth—For the prevention and treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis it becomes of vital importance that a positive diagnosis shall be made at the earliest possible moment, and that the value of bacteriological examinations of the sputa for this purpose may be at the service of physicians in all cases not under treatment in hospitals, the Department is prepared to make such bacteriological examinations for diagnosis, if samples of the sputa, freshly discharged, are furnished in clean, wide-necked, stoppered bottles, accompanied by the name, age, sex and address of the patient, duration of the disease, and the name and address of the attending physician. Bottles for collecting such sputa, with blank forms to be filled in, can be obtained at any of the drug-stores now used as stations for the distribution and collection of serum tubes for diphtheria cultures. After the sputum has been obtained, if the bottle, with the accompanying slip filled out, is left at any one of these stations, it will be collected by the Department, examined microscopically, and a report of the examination forwarded to the attending physician free of charge.

Fifth—The authorities of all public institutions, such as hospitals, dispensaries, asylums, prisons, homes, etc., will be required to furnish to the Department the name, sex, age, occupation and last address of every consumptive coming under observation within seven days of such time.

It is the earnest wish of the Board of Health that all practicing physicians in this city co-operate with the Board in an earnest and determined effort to restrict the ravages of the most prevalent and formidable disease with which we have to deal.

By order of the Board of Health,

CHARLES G. WILSON, *President.*

EMMONS CLARK, *Secretary.*

