



By [Brittany Crittenden](#)

Published: Mar. 7, 2025 at 10:05 PM CST | Updated: Mar. 7, 2025 at 10:22 PM CST



LUBBOCK, Texas (KCBD) - Research scientists at the Bioterrorism Response Lab at Texas Tech are now testing measles cases from across the area, hoping their timely work could help slow the spread on the South Plains.

During a hearing in Austin Monday before the Committee of Public Health, State Health Services Commissioner Dr. Jennifer Shuford explained how researchers in Lubbock are now a part of the fight to stop measles from spreading in West Texas.

"We have asked our Laboratory Response Network partner, and so it's Texas Tech who runs a public health lab out there, asked them to also stand up testing and have given them all the support and supplies that they need to do that," Dr. Shuford said. "They should be standing that up this week for local testing to be done."

That testing began Monday at the Texas Tech Institute of Environmental and Human Health. Within the institute is the Biological Threat Research Lab, and under that umbrella is the Bioterrorism Response Lab. It's part of the CDC Laboratory Response Network for Biological Threats.

Biological Threat Coordinator Cynthia Reinoso Webb says the lab previously didn't have the capability to test for

measles, but the state needs help.

“This is very important. We’ve increased our capability to be able to test this for measles,” she said. “And we’re even extending our hours so we can receive samples, so we can accommodate for the region, due to that very short window of time from collection to testing or freezing.”

The lab covers 67 counties in West Texas, so it sent testing centers instructions on how to get samples to the lab at Reese Center just west of Lubbock.

“That includes, you know, what types of samples, how to package, how to ship, what storage temperatures, things like that, and then submission forms. So, our laboratories were notified of that and then we started accepting samples this Monday,” Reinoso Webb said.

She says since the lab is so close to the outbreak, it’s now able to get results back within the same day. She says that means doctors can detect the disease quicker and epidemiologists can quickly track down who else may be exposed.

“Having the capability to test here, close to where the outbreak is, is actually very important to the region,” she said. “We’re not just helping the state lab with load, it’s not just that, but having the proximity to be able to receive samples.”

She says the lab is communicating with local, regional and state agencies to keep everyone on the same page about testing and positivity rates.

The lab also sends positive samples to the Minnesota Public Health Department. It can do genotyping, where Reinoso Webb says it can look at the entire sequence of the virus and identify the strain. She says that can help researchers learn if the strain closely resembles other cases in the region, or if it’s something new.

Copyright 2025 KCBD. All rights reserved.