



4/29/10 TB ADVOCACY ACTION

Stop TB USA was formerly known as the National Coalition for Elimination of Tuberculosis (NCET). Please pass this information on to your colleagues who are interested in TB elimination.

We have been asked to pass on this “ACTION ALERT” update from Nuala Moore of Stop TB USA Partner, the American Thoracic Society:

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2011 TB Funding – Contact Your Members of Congress Now!

March 2010 – Now is the time for TB advocates to contact members of Congress to support TB program funding. The House and Senate Appropriations subcommittees will begin drafting the 2011 spending bills in May. The Labor-Health and Human Services and Education Subcommittees draft the annual health spending bill, known as the Labor-HHS-ED Appropriations bill.

The President’s proposed budget for 2011 recommends \$143 million for CDC’s domestic TB program, a proposed \$1.2 million cut, targeted to come from travel expenses. It is important to note that at this point, and until Congress has passed the health spending bill, expected sometime in the Summer or Fall, this cut is simply a budget proposal.

Put a Face on TB

It is essential that TB advocates “put a face” on TB by discussing patient cases. You do not need to give names or counties where patients live, just tell a brief story about the difficulties that individual patients, including children, face such as loss of employment, stigma, harshness of the MDR treatment regimen, etc.

Action Issue 1 – If your Representative is listed below, contact them by May 7 to urge them to prevent a cut to CDC’s TB program in the 2011 health spending bill and instead provide an urgently needed investment into eliminating TB in the US!

Members of the House Labor-HHS subcommittee:

Obey (WI),
Chair
Lowey (D-NY)
DeLauro (D-CT)
Jackson (D-IL)
Kennedy (D-RI)

Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
B. Lee (D-CA)
Honda (D-CA)
McCollum (D-MN)
Ryan (R-OH)
Moran (D-VA)

Tiahrt (R-S)
Rehburg (R-MT)
Alexander (R-LA)
Bonner (R-AL)
Cole (R-OK)

Action Issue 2 – Call your Senators!

Targeted Senators (members of the Labor-HHS Subcommittee):

Harkin (D-IA)	Inouye (D-HI)	Kohl (D-WI)	Murray (D-WA)
Landrieu (D-LA)	Durbin (D-IL)	Reed (D-RI)	Pryor (D-AR)
Specter (D-PA)	Cochran (R-MS)	Gregg (R-NH)	Hutchison (R-TX)
Shelby (R-AL)	Alexander (R-TN)		

Congress passed the bipartisan Comprehensive TB Elimination Act in October 2008. This new law recommended a funding level of \$220 million for CDC's domestic TB program in FY2011. TB advocates must educate their members of Congress, particularly members of the House and Senate Labor-HHS subcommittees, about this funding level and the reasons why TB programs need this increased funding.

How to Contact Your Representative/Senators

Call the Capitol Switchboard at 1-202-224-3121 and ask for your Rep/Sen. or give your zip code if you do not know their name. When you are connected to an office, ask for the Appropriations/Health Legislative Assistant. If you leave a voicemail message, include your name and phone number so that they can call you back.

The following is a sample phone/e-mail message: " I am a constituent and a healthcare provider from (your town) and I am calling to ask Rep/Sen. _____ to prevent a recommended cut to CDC's domestic TB program recommended under the President's Fy2011 budget. I am concerned that if the TB program is cut that states will be vulnerable to resurgences of TB, including outbreaks of drug resistant TB. Due to state budget cuts, many states are struggling to maintain their programs and treat steady cases of drug resistant TB, which is very expensive and complicated to treat.

The Comprehensive TB Elimination Act, passed in 2008, authorized \$220 million for CDC's TB program for FY2011. I understand that the 2011 budget is restricted, but I ask you to prevent a cut to CDC's TB program and provide a needed funding increase. This funding will also support CDC research into new tools to reduce the global TB pandemic. Thank you."

(Supplement your message with state TB data such as number of drug resistant cases, etc). Leave your name & phone number on voicemails so that staffers can call you back.

Talking Points:

- Although the US reported a decline in cases in 2009, this data is preliminary and CDC is investigating the causes, which include reduced immigration and overseas screening and treatment of TB for refugees
- The US had 107 cases of MDR-TB in 2008
- TB is the second leading infectious disease killer in the world, taking over 1.8 million lives per year.
- Drug resistant TB costs \$100-300K to treat vs. non-DR costs of \$10-12K annually
- New tools are needed to more effectively prevent, diagnose, and treat TB. The newest class of TB drugs is over 40 years old and is inadequate for combating drug resistant TB. The vaccine is only used for children in developing countries, as it has little efficacy in preventing adult pulmonary TB.

Please contact Nuala Moore, at Nmoore@thoracic.org, if you have any questions.