

Update: Tuberculosis Control in California

Tuberculosis (TB) remains a persistent health threat

- With one third of the world's population infected with this airborne infectious disease, TB anywhere is TB everywhere.
- TB is spread when a person with active TB coughs and releases infectious particles into the air. People who share the same air and breathe in these particles can become infected.
- Most TB is still curable and preventable.

California reports the most TB of any state in the US (20% of US cases)

- This year, more than 2,000 Californians will become sick with TB.
- Nearly every week, a child in California under the age of five is stricken with TB.
- Every other day a Californian dies with TB.

Californians with TB infection are a reservoir of future cases of TB disease

- With our global society and our mobile population, Californians encounter TB.
- The pool of individuals with TB infection in California, the source of future cases, is 2.3 million.
- Infection becomes disease when immune systems are weakened by conditions like diabetes, smoking, HIV, or simply through the aging process.

Local public health departments protect the health of Californians

- TB programs in California evaluate 10,000 TB suspects and nearly 20,000 contacts each year for TB.
- TB programs diagnose and ensure completion of appropriate drug therapy to cure TB thereby preventing new cases in communities across California.
- Effective diagnosis, monitoring and treatment of TB, as well as contact investigations are provided by public health departments directly or overseen and managed to ensure adequate treatment and cure.

Diminishing resources restrict California's ability to find and cure TB

- TB control is the shared responsibility of federal, state and local public health department TB programs.
- The past decade has seen funding for local TB control and prevention efforts reduced at every level, limiting the services provided to patients with TB disease, the capability to prevent TB disease in our communities, and the ability to prevent emergence of drug resistance.

Accessing drugs to combat TB is a growing challenge, calling for urgent action

- Drug shortages have grown, affecting the most common and potent drugs used to treat TB and drug resistant TB. Shortages threaten our ability to prevent and control TB.
- CTCA urges national partners to eliminate ongoing drug shortages that threaten the control of TB and cause inefficient, reactive, drains on limited resources nationwide to solve the same problems
- The California Conference of Local Health Officers and CTCA ask our National Representatives to support elimination of this treatable and preventable disease by joining the TB Elimination Caucus co-chaired by Reps. Eliot Engel (D-NY), Gene Green (D-TX) and Don Young (R-Alaska).