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September 28, 2023

The Coalition for a TB Free California (CTC) is member led and partner supported. Members are California community organizations, clinics, providers, TB survivors and advocates. Partners are public health department TB experts and representatives of national organizations and industry.

In 2021, an Inviting and Convening Consultant was brought on to grow the coalition, coordinate meetings, and help develop strategies and activities.

*Key activities:*

2021-2022 activities primarily focused on growing the coalition membership which had two members outside of public health. It was a challenge to bring new partners into the TB elimination focused coalition. FOMO was the key in recruitment. The 2021 World TB Day Webinar recruitment effort yielded 9 new members and a member set agenda of educating state elected officials about the TB epidemic and impacted communities and the need to fund TB elimination in California.

One of the coalition members recommended that the coalition pursue a large ($92 million) state budget request for pulmonary diseases, with a portion going to TB. Though this initial request was not successful, initial meetings with the following offices took place: Assemblyman Evan Low, Senator Maria Elena Durazo, the Senate Health Committee, the Assembly Budget Committee, the California Latino Legislative Caucus. The coalition learned a lot about the state budget process and timeline that it applied to year two.

The leaders of the process and strategy in 2022 decided to focus on the TB elimination component of the larger pulmonary disease request of 2021.

In 2022-2023, CTC leadership decided to continue efforts to secure funding for TB elimination. Based on the state’s fiscal challenges and the desire to focus specifically on TB, the coalition decided to pursue a smaller budget request of $12 million over 5 years. Funds would go to partnerships developed by counties to support TB prevention activities.

The coalition held several legislative meetings to discuss the funding request. Four potential champions were identified: Assemblyman Rick Zbur, Assemblyman Evan Low, Senator Maria Elena Durazo, and Senator Dave Cortese. Zbur’s and Durazo’s interest was the result of one individual reaching out as a constituent to request meetings. Cortese’s interest was the result of a relationship built with his office by BREATHE California.

Assemblyman Zbur met with the coalition and included a $1 million request for a Los Angeles County TB pilot project in his list of special local funding requests. Though this funding was ultimately not included in the final state budget. There were several positive outcomes from this process:

* The coalition met with several key legislators, caucuses, and high-level staff and educated them about the TB epidemic, impacted communities, and the need for funding.
* CTC held a virtual legislative briefing attended by several legislative offices.
* Many CTC members participated in these activities supported by coalition partners.
* CTC members and partners learned the impact of a constituent developing a relationship with their own elected officials.

*Next steps:*

The coalition is already preparing for next year’s state budget and legislative process by forming a Policy & Advocacy Working Group that is developing ideas for legislation and will develop the next funding request.

Three legislators have reached out to the coalition asking for ideas about potential TB legislation.

CTC members have expressed interest in pursuing an AB 789 look alike bill. This bill, signed into law two years ago, requires an offer of hepatitis B and C screening in primary care based on US Preventive Services Task Force recommendations.

*Outreach:*

The coalition has recruited several new members in the past 2 ½ years, primarily through our webinars. By hosting webinars on key TB issues, we are able to reach out to organizations and clinics that serve communities at higher risk for TB and invite them to learn more.

Organizations that participate are viewed as potential new coalition members and are requested to join. Of particular note, 6 new organizations (primarily those that serve immigrant communities) joined the coalition after the most recent webinar on USPSTF screening recommendations.

The coalition will continue to host webinars 2-3 times per year.

CTC Members (as of 9/28/23):

AIDS Legal Referral Panel

Alliance San Diego

Asian & Pacific Islander Health Forum

Asian Americans Advancing Justice

Asian American Drug Abuse Program, Inc.

Asian Liver Center

Bienestar

BREATHE California

California Hepatitis Alliance

Centro Del Inmigrante

Mil Mujeres

Napa Valley Care Center

Northeast Medical Services (NEMS)

Samahan Health Centers

San Francisco AIDS Foundation

San Ysidro Health Center

SF Hep B Free

Southern Indian Health Council

The Bridging Group

Urban Street Angels

Vietnamese Cancer Foundation