



9/9/08 TB ADVOCACY UPDATE!

STOP TB USA was formerly known as the National Coalition for Elimination of Tuberculosis (NCET).

We have been asked to pass this on by STOP TB USA Partner, the American Thoracic Society:

Thank you for your work over the last month on the TB bill, S. 1551/HR 1532. At this point, the news is good and we are moving toward a Senate floor vote and a vote in the House Energy and Commerce Committee, chaired by Rep. Dingell (D-MI). It is critical that we keep up the education over the next 2 weeks with calls to all Senators in support of the bill and in the House a focus on Energy and Commerce Committee members, particularly Reps. Barton (R-TX - Arlington, Ennis) and Deal (R-GA-Gainesville, LaFayette, Dalton). If you made a call to your Senator a few months ago, now is the time to call again! Thanks for your help!

TB Bill Needs Final Push for Passage Contact Your Members of Congress to Urge Support for TB Bill

The domestic TB bill, the Comprehensive TB Elimination Act, S. 1551/H.R. 1532, sponsored by Sens. Brown (D-OH) and Hutchison (R-TX) and Reps. Green (D-TX) and Wilson (R-NM), is awaiting a Senate vote and a vote in the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Sen. Brown will bring the bill to a floor vote within the next few weeks. It is critical that the bill is passed by the end of September, before Congress recesses for the election. We have learned that some Republican Senators have said that they must hear from their constituents about the need for the bill before they will vote for it. Members are urged to contact their two Senators by September 15 to ensure a Senate vote in favor of the bill.

There is also a need to urge the House Energy and Commerce Committee, chaired by Rep. Dingell (D-MI), to schedule a vote on the bill in September. Chairman Dingell supports the bill, but Republican members of the committee, including Reps. Barton (R-TX) and Deal (R-GA), have not agreed to move the bill yet. After you have contacted your two Senators, please contact your House Representative and urge them to cosponsor the bill and urge its passage before Congress adjourns in October. The following is a link to the membership of the Energy and Commerce Committee. **Please check this list to see if your Representative is on it and if so, please make a special effort to call ASAP.** (House Energy and Commerce Committee info at: <http://energycommerce.house.gov/membios/>)

How to Take Action

Call the Capitol Switchboard at 1-202-224-3121 and ask for your Senator/ Representative or give your zip code if you do not know their name. When you are connected to an office, ask for the 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 message: " I am a constituent and a healthcare provider from (your town) and I am calling to ask Sen/Rep. _____ to

support a Senate/House vote on the Comprehensive TB Elimination Act, S. 1551/H.R. 1532, as soon as possible. The bill must be passed this year to prevent outbreaks of drug resistant TB in the U.S. and reinvest in TB research to find easier, more effective diagnostics, drugs and vaccines. (Supplement message with state TB facts such as number of drug resistant cases).”

Summary of the Comprehensive TB Elimination Act, S. 1551/H.R. 1532

The bill, sponsored by Reps. Green (D-TX) & Wilson (R-NM) and Sens. Brown (D-OH) & Hutchison (R-TX), will provide increased funding for the CDC’s National Program for the Elimination of Tuberculosis, including funding for state TB control programs, and expand research on TB diagnostic and treatment tools. The bill will intensify targeted efforts to prevent, detect and treat the disease among African Americans and expand detection of TB at the U.S.-Mexico border and treatment of binational TB cases.

Talking Points:

- TB is the one of the leading infectious disease killers in the world, taking over 1.7 million lives per year.
- The 2006 case of the drug resistant TB patient who traveled between the U.S. and Europe, illustrated that the U.S. is vulnerable to drug resistant TB.
- The current funding level for CDC’s Division of TB Elimination represents a more than 25% decrease over the past decade when adjusted for inflation. As a result of the lack of funding, state TB programs are ill-equipped to respond to drug resistant TB and to eliminate TB in their states.
- New tools are needed to more effectively prevent, diagnose, and treat TB. The standard method of diagnosing TB is over 100 years old and fails to adequately detect TB in children and those co-infected with HIV/AIDS.
- The newest class of TB drugs is over 40 years old and is inadequate for combating drug resistant TB. H.R. 1532/S. 1551 will ensure that the U.S. is prepared to respond to outbreaks of drug resistant TB and will reinvest in TB research to find faster, easier and more effective diagnostics, drugs and vaccines to control TB.

Please contact the ATS Washington Office if you have any questions and to let us know when you have contacted your members of Congress by e-mailing Nmoore@thoracic.org. For more information, visit the ATS website at www.thoracic.org/advocacy