

Support Funding to Eliminate TB

Sending Office: Honorable Eliot L. Engel
Sent By: S.Chaudhary@mail.house.gov

Support Funding for the Fight Against Domestic Tuberculosis

Deadline: March 5

Dear Colleague:

Please join us in supporting \$195.7 million for the fight to eliminate tuberculosis (TB) in the U.S., as part of the Fiscal Year 2021 Appropriations process.

This funding is needed to strengthen our national efforts to identify, treat and prevent TB, including drug resistant TB and TB infection, implement the National Action Plan to Combat Multi-Drug Resistant (MDR) TB, and intensify research into this disease, including efforts to develop new diagnostic, treatment and prevention tools.

According to the World Health Organization, TB is the leading infectious disease killer worldwide, ahead of HIV/AIDS, with 1.5 million individuals dying from the disease annually. In the U.S., every state continues to report cases of TB each year and this airborne disease is a significant public health issue. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are up to 13 million individuals in the U.S. with latent TB infections, a future reservoir of active TB cases. Funding to support a national TB prevention initiative would allow state and local health departments to identify and treat those at greatest risk for progressing to disease, preventing future cases of TB.

Many believe TB is a disease of the past, but it is still a real public health threat due to a lack of resources to properly identify, treat and prevent all forms of the disease and develop new, more effective tools to fight TB.

In order to put the U.S. back on the path to TB elimination, the CDC's domestic TB program must be funded at \$195.7 million in FY 2021. If you are interested in signing the letter to support this request, please contact Sahil Chaudhary with Congressman Eliot Engel at s.chaudhary@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

Eliot L. Engel

Member of Congress

Don Young

Member of Congress

Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro

Ranking Member Tom Cole

Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, & Education

Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, & Education

House Committee on Appropriations

House Committee on Appropriations

Washington, DC 20515

Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

As you craft legislation making appropriations for fiscal year (FY) 2021, we respectfully request \$195.7 million in funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) domestic tuberculosis (TB) program in the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

TB is a curable, preventable disease, but is the leading infectious disease killer worldwide, ahead of HIV/AIDS. In its 2019 report on antibiotic resistance, the CDC identified drug resistant TB as a serious health threat to the United States. State and local public health departments are struggling with the high costs of treating drug resistant TB, which can cost between \$154,000 and \$250,000 per case. Complicated co-morbidities such as diabetes also contribute to extremely high treatment costs, even for TB that is not drug-resistant. Additionally, the CDC reports that there are up to 13 million individuals in the U.S. with latent TB infection who are at risk of developing TB disease. A national prevention initiative, focused on those who are infected and are at greatest risk for progressing to disease, would bring the U.S. significantly closer to wiping out this curable disease for good. However, funding is currently not available to support these activities at the state and local levels; our ability to protect the public's health by restricting transmission of the disease is challenging given the current level-funding.

A positive step occurred in December 2015 when an interagency National Action Plan to Combat Multi-Drug Resistant TB (NAP) was released, providing a comprehensive framework for addressing MDR-TB globally and in the U.S. Unfortunately, this plan was not funded. Adequately funding the NAP's activities through the CDC, NIH and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is essential to combating TB, both in the United States and abroad.

Many believe TB is a disease of the past, but it is still a real public health threat due to a lack of resources to properly identify, treat and prevent all forms of the disease and develop new, more effective tools to fight TB. There is an urgent need to implement a nationwide prevention initiative, as well as develop shorter treatment regimens, faster diagnostics and vaccines to prevent all forms of TB in children and adults.

We ask that the FY 2021 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill provide \$195.7 million to put the U.S. back on the path to TB elimination.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.