



THE AIDS INSTITUTE

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THE AIDS INSTITUTE RECOGNIZES WORLD TB DAY “Partnerships for TB Elimination”

Washington, DC - One hundred and twenty six years ago, March 24, 1882, Robert Koch announced the discovery of Mycobacterium tuberculosis, the bacterium that causes tuberculosis (TB). Each year, this date is observed as World TB Day as a means of drawing attention to this global plagued - once thought to be nearly eradicated in this country and the developed world. Worldwide, TB remains one of the leading causes of death from infectious disease. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an estimated one third of the world's population - about 2 billion persons are infected with TB. The twelfth annual World Health Organization (WHO) report, Global Tuberculosis Control 2008, released just last week, indicated that there were 9.2 million new cases of TB in 2006 (the last year for which data is available), including 700,000 cases among people living with HIV, and 500,000 cases of multi-drug resistant TB (MDR-TB). An estimated 1.6 million people died from TB in 2006. Dr. Gene Copello, Executive Director of The AIDS Institute, commented: “We have a responsibility to address TB, a major global threat, if we are to truly improve health worldwide. HIV/TB co-infection reinforces this need.”

According to Dr. Cesar Caceres, Board President of The AIDS Institute, and a practicing physician with more than 25 years of experience treating people with HIV/AIDS, “there are two major factors slowing progress in eradicating TB. One is multidrug-resistant TB and the other is HIV/TB co-infection. The combination of HIV and TB is lethal”. In addition to the one million-plus deaths due to TB, another 200,000 people with HIV died from HIV-associated TB.

James Sykes, Global Program Coordinator for The AIDS Institute, said “this year's theme for World TB Day – “Partnerships for TB Elimination” is indicative of the need to have a coordinated and comprehensive plan for prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care if we are to have any sustained momentum in eradicating TB. In countries where there is a high burden of HIV disease, we also see a high burden of TB – just how great a burden is unknown because of the lack of facilities to diagnose it. The emergence of multidrug-resistant TB makes such an approach urgent”.

World TB Day provides an opportunity for TB programs, advocacy organizations, faith-based organizations, patients groups, and the general population to increase awareness, describe problems and seek solutions to the TB pandemic and to support worldwide TB control efforts.

For more information about World TB Day, please visit: Stop TB Partnership at:

www.StopTB.org

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For more information and to become involved in AIDS advocacy work, please contact
The AIDS Institute at: (202) 835-8373, or by email at: Info@theaidsinstitute.org or www.TheAIDSInstitute.org

The AIDS Institute is a nonprofit agency that promotes action for social change
through public policy research, advocacy and education.