

December 4, 2014

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Subcommittee for State and Foreign
Operations and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Subcommittee for State and Foreign
Operations and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairman
Subcommittee for State and Foreign
Operations and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Subcommittee for State and Foreign
Operations and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Graham and Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member Lowey:

Thank you for your leadership on the Appropriations Subcommittees for State and Foreign Operations and Related Programs and your dedication to global health and development efforts. We write to request that you provide the House funding level of \$236 million for the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Tuberculosis (TB) program in the final Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 omnibus appropriations bill.

TB, an airborne infectious disease, is the second leading global infectious disease killer in the world, killing 1.5 million people annually. It is a leading cause of death for people with HIV and is one of the top five leading causes of death for women of reproductive age. And TB remains a public health issue in the U.S., with every state continuing to report cases annually.

The continued spread of drug resistant TB around the world is a serious global health problem. In a globally connected world, these dangerous and costly strains pose a direct threat to the U.S. Globally, there are about 480,000 multi- drug resistant (MDR)-TB cases in 2013, yet barely a quarter of people with drug resistant TB are being identified and even fewer treated.

The USAID TB Program provides urgently needed technical assistance and programmatic implementation to 27 of the world's most highly burdened countries. This helps our foreign aid dollars go further, reaching more people through improved health systems. The TB program also plays a critical role in successfully leveraging multi-lateral TB resources, including the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, by assisting countries in the development of grant applications and annual country strategic and operational plans. Finally, USAID has made notable success in expanding diagnosis and

treatment services for people with MDR-TB and this vital work must continue if we are to stop the global spread of drug resistant TB. USAID's TB program supported the following activities in its focus countries in FY 2013:

- 31 countries received support to strengthen their laboratory networks
- 30 countries scaled up their MDR-TB programs
- 23 countries received training for health care providers on pediatric TB

Scientific advances have led to progress in the development of new and better diagnostic tools that will transform the fight against TB, but research must be accelerated to develop shorter treatment regimens and effective vaccines. The current TB treatment is long and complex, using drugs developed almost 50 years ago. The TB vaccine, which is more than 90 years old, provides some protection against TB in children but is unreliable against adult pulmonary TB. U.S. investments can help provide support for the development of new tools to more effectively prevent, diagnose, and treat TB, and can then take these new technologies to scale. For example, the TB program's introduction of the Xpert diagnostic test to 25 countries is helping detect more people who are infected with both TB and HIV.

As the Subcommittee considers maximizing the impact of our global health dollars, we urge you to prioritize funding to prevent, detect, and treat TB and provide at least \$236 million for USAID's TB program, as provided by the House State and Foreign Operations subcommittee.

Sincerely,

Aeras
American Lung Association
American Thoracic Society
Friends of the Global Fight Against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
Global Health Council
Infectious Diseases Society of America
International HIV/AIDS Alliance USA
Management Sciences for Health
RESULTS
TB Alliance
Treatment Action Group