



NEW YORK COMMUNITY GROUPS CALL ON CITY, STATE, FEDERAL ACTORS TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR TUBERCULOSIS

Advocates alarmed that budget cuts led to first rise in TB cases in New York City in over 25 years

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NEW YORK, March 22, 2018—African Services Committee, FPWA, Hispanic Federation, Hispanic Health Network, Housing Works, Latino Commission on AIDS, the New York Immigration Coalition, and Treatment Action Group call on New York City, New York State, and federal officials to restore funding for tuberculosis (TB). This follows news that there has been a rise in cases of TB, the first such increase since 1992. Drug-resistant TB, which is more difficult and costly to treat—averaging \$296,000 per case, is also increasing.

“TB is the leading killer of people with HIV worldwide, and Americans are not immune, especially in our communities of color and immigrant communities,” stated Guillermo Chacon, President of the Latino Commission on AIDS and President of the Hispanic Health Network. “If New York is serious about being the healthiest state, we must address TB. If New York is to honor its commitment to end the HIV epidemic, we cannot forget about TB, its most deadly—but preventable, curable—coinfection.”

“TB is on the rise, affecting the most vulnerable populations, including New York City immigrant communities,” said Steve Choi, executive director of the New York Immigration Coalition. “Among New Yorkers diagnosed with TB in 2017, 86% were foreign born. The majority of them have been in the U.S. for over five years, leaving ample time for outreach and prevention that’s simply not being done. Our city and state governments have promised to make New York a safe haven for all—to do so, they must address TB.”

“Budget cuts reduce community groups’ ability to provide the free services necessary to find TB early and prevent it from spreading or developing,” said African Services Committee Director of Advocacy, Amanda Lugg. “Members of the immigrant community are suffering unnecessarily from this preventable, curable disease.”

The increase in cases from 2016 to 2017 follows years of progressively reduced funding from the city, state, and federal levels. Though New York City funding has been maintained under the current administration, plummeting support between 2007 and 2012 reduced city funding from \$16.43M in 2007 (adjusted for inflation) to just \$8.59 million in the current fiscal year. State budget cuts in the current fiscal year reduced support to New York City services by 20%. Federal funding for TB in New York City has shrunk by nearly three-quarters from 2007 to 2017.

“We know from decades of past experience that unless we change course quickly, this pattern of years of devastating cuts followed by a predictable subsequent rise in TB cases are a harbinger of much worse to come,” said Housing Works President and CEO Charles King. “Similar cuts dismantling the public health response to TB during the 1970s and 1980s led to a TB outbreak and drug-resistant TB in New York City—and we spent over \$1 billion in the 1990s to fix those disastrous mistakes. Let’s not repeat history.”

As a result of budget cuts and increasing case rates, funding per case of TB has decreased by over 56%. All but four of the city’s chest clinics have been shuttered, and the City’s TB response staff has been reduced by nearly half. Health, housing, and immigrant advocate and community groups are asking for a restoration of funding for New York City’s TB response to \$14.89 million at the city level, \$7.83 million at the state level, and \$10.9 million at the federal level.

“We have the tools we need to end TB as a public health threat in New York City—what’s missing is funding and political will to do so,” noted Erica Lessem, Deputy Executive Director – TB from Treatment Action Group. “That TB is on the rise in our city in this state and country, with their wealth of resources, is inexcusable.”

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About African Services Committee (ASC): African Services is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health and self-sufficiency of the African community. We provide health, housing, legal, educational, and social services to thousands of newcomers each year in New York City with a focus on health promotion and disease prevention, care and support. We also work on the frontlines of the global AIDS epidemic; operating five clinics in Ethiopia and through advocacy and policy work in the U.S. and abroad.

About FPWA: FPWA is an anti-poverty, policy, and advocacy nonprofit with a membership network of 170 human service and faith-based organizations. For nearly a century, FPWA has been a prominent force in New York City's social services system, advocating for fair public policies, collaborating with partner agencies, and growing its community-based membership and coalition networks to meet the needs of all New Yorkers. Each year, through our network of member agencies, FPWA serves thousands of New Yorkers of all ages, ethnicities, and denominations.

About Hispanic Federation (HF): Hispanic Federation is the nation’s premier Latino nonprofit membership organization. Founded in 1990, HF seeks to support Hispanic families and strengthen Latino institutions through work in the areas of education, health, immigration, civic engagement, economic empowerment, & the environment.

About Housing Works: Housing Works is a vibrant, healing community of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. Our mission is to end the dual crises of homelessness and AIDS through relentless advocacy, the provision of lifesaving services, and entrepreneurial businesses that sustain our efforts. As the largest grassroots AIDS organization in the U.S., we are committed to the use of non-violent civil disobedience to further our mission. Through our advocacy offices in New York City, Albany, D.C., Haiti, and Puerto Rico, we fight for funding and legislation to ensure that all PLWHAs have access to quality housing, healthcare, HIV prevention information, legal protections from stigma and discrimination, and other essential services.

About the Latino Commission on AIDS: The Latino Commission on AIDS (Commission) is a nonprofit membership organization founded in 1990 dedicated to meet the health challenges and addressing the impact of HIV/AIDS. The Commission is the leading organization coordinating National Hispanic Hepatitis Awareness Day (May 15), National Latino AIDS Awareness Day (October 15), Latinos and the Deep South, and other prevention, research, capacity building, and advocacy programs across the United States and its territories. The Latino Commission is the founder of the Hispanic Health Network, dedicated to eliminate health disparities in our communities.

About the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC): The New York Immigration Coalition is an umbrella policy and advocacy organization for more than 200 groups in New York State that work with immigrants and refugees. The NYIC aims to achieve a fairer and more just society that values the contributions of immigrants and extends opportunity to all by promoting immigrants’ full civic participation, fostering their leadership, and providing a unified voice and a vehicle for collective action for New York’s diverse immigrant communities.

About Treatment Action Group (TAG): Treatment Action Group is an independent, activist, and community-based research and policy think tank fighting for better treatment and prevention, a vaccine, and a cure for HIV, TB, and hepatitis C virus (HCV). TAG works to ensure that all people with HIV, TB, and HCV receive lifesaving treatment, care, and information. We are science-based treatment activists working to expand and accelerate vital research and effective community engagement with research and policy institutions.