At the Forefront

The Tuberculosis Trials Consortium (TBTC) is the leading tuberculosis clinical research collaborative in the world. Established in 1995 and funded through the Division of Tuberculosis Elimination at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, TBTC includes sites in the U.S., Africa, Asia, Europe and South America. The TBTC’s main focus has been on finding shorter, better-tolerated, programmatically relevant strategies for curing and preventing the spread of tuberculosis (TB). TB sickens more than 8 million people and kills over 1 million people annually – particularly people with HIV/AIDS in Africa and women of reproductive age globally.

Groundbreaking Research

Over the past 18 years the TBTC has conducted a series of influential trials that have had a direct impact on TB treatment in the U.S. and around the world. Important TBTC studies include the Consortium’s very first major clinical trial, Study 22, which was pivotal in demonstrating to doctors and public health authorities that individuals with certain features of tuberculosis were less likely to be cured with the prevailing treatment strategy. This led to specific recommendations to prolong therapy in patients with active TB at high risk for relapse. This landmark study also demonstrated that people with HIV/AIDS plus TB are likely to develop resistance to one of the key TB treatment drugs, rifampin, and thus must be treated more intensively.

Subsequent TBTC studies have taken the field significantly far in understanding the role that drugs in the rifamycin and fluoroquinolones classes might play for TB treatment shortening. In addition, a major study published in the New England Journal of Medicine in December, 2012 showed that 12 doses of a 2-drug combination given once weekly was as powerful as 9 months of daily therapy with one drug in preventing TB from developing among those at high risk for disease.

Save the TBTC!

The TBTC is facing significant funding cuts, which will essentially put it out of business and slow or stop vitally important clinical trials that are designed to have almost immediate impact on TB control programs in the United States. We can’t let that happen - the opportunity and the need to conduct TB clinical trials have never been greater as there are promising new TB drugs in the pipeline. Funding reductions will devastate the entire consortium and result in the closure of clinical trials sites and the halting of vital research into new TB treatment regimens that are urgently needed to halt the global TB pandemic.

We urge congress to restore $4 million in funding to CDC’s DTBE in the FY2014 Labor-Health and Human Services Appropriations bill to prevent the halting of this vital global health research!