

October 22, 2013

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to call attention to the grave consequences that a massive funding cut, as was proposed in your FY2014 budget for USAID's Tuberculosis (TB) program, would have if enacted and to urge you not to include this proposal in your FY 2015 budget.

Your budget for FY14 proposed a \$44.3 million (19%) cut from the estimated FY2013 level. If enacted, this proposal would have slashed U.S. global TB funding to its lowest level since 2009. In light of the growing threat of drug-resistant TB, and the impact of TB on women and children, we urge you to instead consider an increase for FY 15 to sustain and intensify the fight against TB.

Today, the World Health Organization (WHO) released a report making clear that, despite progress in addressing TB, a large number of cases - about 3 million - are not being reported to public health authorities, and many of these would not be diagnosed and treated, and drug resistant TB is growing. The report also makes clear the grave impact the disease is having on the health of women and children.

TB kills an estimated 1.4 million people a year, the second deadliest infectious disease after HIV/AIDS. One-quarter of these deaths occur among people living with HIV and tuberculosis remains the leading cause of death among people with HIV worldwide. Improper and incomplete treatment has led to the emergence of multidrug-resistant (MDR) TB and extensively drug-resistant (XDR) TB, which are more costly and difficult to diagnose and treat. Citing regions where over a third of new cases of TB are MDR, Dr. Margaret Chan, Director General of the WHO, recently described the threat of drug resistant TB as a "powder keg."

The United States, largely through USAID, has a strong record of success in partnering with national governments and international organizations to improve TB control throughout the world. In part because of USAID funding, TB prevalence and mortality have decreased sharply. TB incidence has also begun to decrease although not rapidly enough to prevent an anticipated more than 8 million new cases and 1.4 million deaths in the coming year. More ominously, because of the legacy of decades of inattention to effective TB control measures, the continued spread of drug-resistant TB could well reverse the hard-earned gains of the past 10 years (as was dramatically demonstrated in our own country in the early 1990's).

The USAID TB Program is carrying out functions that are distinct from those carried out by PEPFAR and the Global Fund. It provides urgently needed technical assistance and programmatic implementation to 30 of the world's most highly burdened countries. USAID is working with countries to strengthen TB programs by providing technical assistance to upgrade

laboratories, improve the quality of treatment in the private sector, and actively find TB cases. Finally, USAID is making notable success in scaling up the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of drug resistant TB, one of the biggest challenges for many highly-burdened countries. Between 2010 and 2011 in USAID-focus countries, the number of people correctly identified and placed on MDR TB treatment increased from 19,000 to 44,000.

USAID is also an important funder of product development and operational research, helping to bring new diagnostics, drugs, and vaccines from the bench to the field. USAID has played an essential role in the development and roll-out of the new rapid diagnostic test, Xpert® MTB/RIF which has the potential to revolutionize the fight against TB by dramatically reducing the delay in obtaining a diagnosis and drug susceptibility from weeks to hours. Late last year the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the first new TB drug (bedaquiline) in 40 years. USAID provides support for late-stage clinical trials for new TB treatments such as bedaquiline. Researchers continue to search for a more effective TB vaccine, with more than a dozen candidates in clinical trials. As vaccine development continues, USAID support is vital to advancing promising candidates through clinical research.

A 19% funding cut to the USAID TB program would, if implemented, jeopardize the core capacity of USAID to effectively assist countries in their fight to stop the spread of drug-resistant TB. While we recognize that you face difficult choices in the budget process, we urge you to consider TB as an important priority in your FY2015 budget proposal, now being prepared, and to avoid any funding reduction for TB. The fight against TB is being won but the balance could easily be shifted. We have only to look at the history of TB in our country where cases increased by 20% between 1986 and 1992 and we became the epicenter of drug resistant TB, to appreciate the consequences of inattention to this deadly disease.

Sincerely,

Veena Antony, MD
Professor of Medicine
Division of Pulmonary, Allergy & Critical
Care Medicine
University of Alabama at Birmingham

David Ashkin MD, FCCP
Medical Director, TB Control Section
Division of Disease Control and Health
Protection

Hilary M. Babcock, MD, MPH
Medical Director, BJC Infection Prevention
and Epidemiology Consortium
Associate Professor of Medicine
Washington University School of Medicine

Robert Benjamin, MD, MPH
Global and Domestic Public Health
Consultant
TB Clinician

John Bernardo, MD
Professor of Medicine, Boston University
School of Medicine

Rajesh Bhagat, MD
Assoc. Professor & Staff Physician
Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care &
Sleep Medicine
University of Mississippi Medical Center

John W. Boldt Jr. MD, FCCP
Erlanger Health System

A. Sonia Buist, MD
Professor Emerita of Medicine
Oregon Health & Science University

Shannon S. Carson, MD
Professor of Medicine
Chief, Division of Pulmonary & Critical
Care Medicine
University of North Carolina School of
Medicine

E. Jane Carter, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine
Alpert School of Medicine at Brown
University

David L. Cohn, MD
Professor, University of Colorado School of
Medicine

Stephanie Davis, MD
Professor of Medicine
University of Indiana

Ivor S. Douglas MD, FRCP
Associate Professor
Chief, Pulmonary Sciences & Critical Care
Medicine Director, Medical Intensive Care
Denver Health Medical Center

Joel Ernst, MD
Professor of Medicine, Microbiology, and
Pathology
New York University School of Medicine

Thomas G. Evans, MD
President and CEO
Aeras
Rockville, Maryland

Kevin P. Fennelly, MD, MPH
Associate Professor of Medicine
Division of Infectious Diseases and Global
Medicine
University of Florida

Thomas Ferkol, MD
Professor of Pediatrics, Cell biology, &
Physiology
Washington University School of Medicine

Patricia Finn, MD
President
American Thoracic Society

Mary Foote, MD, MPH
VECD Fogarty Global Health Fellow &
Infectious Disease Fellow
Emory University School of Medicine

Gerald Friedland, MD
Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology
and Public Health
Yale University School of Medicine

Jennifer Furin, MD, PhD
Assistant Professor of Medicine
TB Research Unit
Case Western Reserve University
Cleveland, OH

Lynn B. Gerald, PhD, MSPH
Associate Dean for Research
Canyon Ranch Endowed Chair/Professor
Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public
Health

David Gozal, MD
The Herbert T. Abelson Professor and Chair
Physician-in-Chief, Comer Children's
Hospital
The University of Chicago

Carol Dukes Hamilton, MD, MHS
Professor of Medicine, Duke University

Nicola A. Hanania, MD, MS, FCCP,
FRCP(C), FACP
Associate Professor of Medicine
Baylor College of Medicine

Elizabeth Harausz, MD, MPH
Fellow in Infectious Disease
Division of Infectious Disease and HIV
Medicine
Case Western Reserve University
Cleveland, OH

Diane Havlir, MD
Professor of Medicine
University of California at San Francisco

Nicholas S. Hill, MD
Chief, Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep
Division & Professor,
Tufts University School of Medicine

Phillip Hopewell, MD
Professor of Medicine,
University of California, San Francisco

Fred Hsieh, MD
Allergy and Immunology
Lerner Research Institute
Cleveland Clinic

W. Charles Huskins, MD, MSc
Chair, Division of Pediatric Infectious
Diseases
Professor of Pediatrics, Mayo Clinic College
of Medicine
Mayo Clinic

Jeffrey Jacobson, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine
University of Illinois, Chicago

Germaine Jacquette, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor
New Jersey Medical School
Global TB Institute
Rutgers University
Newark, New Jersey

James R. Johnson, MD
Professor of Medicine
University of Minnesota

Monica Kraft, MD
Professor of Medicine
Chief, Division of Pulmonary, Allergy &
Critical Care Medicine
Duke University Medical Center

Erin K. Kross, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care
Medicine University of Washington

Jay K. Kolls, MD
Director, Richard King Mellon Foundation
Institute for Pediatric Research
Department of Pediatrics Children's Hospital
of Pittsburgh of UPMC

Daniel R. Kuritzkes, MD
Professor of Medicine
Harvard School of Medicine

Janet S. Lee, MD
Associate Professor
Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, Critical
Care Medicine Department of Medicine,
Graduate School of Public Health University
of Pittsburgh

Michael Lauzardo, MD, MSc
Director, Southeastern National
Tuberculosis Center
Chief, Division of Infectious Diseases and
Global Medicine
University of Florida

Atul Malhotra, MD
Kenneth M. Moser Professor of Medicine
Chief of Pulmonary and Critical Care
Medicine
University of California San Diego

Roberto F. Machado, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine
Section of Pulmonary, Critical Care
Medicine, Sleep and Allergy
University of Illinois Chicago

Trini A. Mathew, MD, MPH
University of Connecticut Health Center

Gustavo Matute-Bello, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine
Division of Pulmonary & Critical Care
Medicine
University of Washington, Seattle, WA

Kenneth H. Mayer, MD
Fenway Health, Harvard Medical School

Laura Milgram, MD
Associate Professor, Pediatrics
Case Western Reserve Univ. School of
Medicine

Payam Nahid, MD
Assoc. Professor of Medicine
University of California, San Francisco

Samya Nasr, MD, CPI
Professor of Pediatrics
University of Michigan Health System

Kent E. Pinkerton, PhD
Professor and Director, Center for Health
and the Environment
University of California, Davis

Lee B. Reichman, MD, MPH, FACP, FCCP
Professor of Medicine; Preventive Medicine
& Community Health
Executive Director
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
NJMS Global Tuberculosis Institute

Randall Reves, MD
Professor of Medicine, Department of
Medicine & Department of Preventive
Medicine & Biometrics
University of Colorado

Kristen Ries, MD, MACP
Professor Emerita of Internal Medicine,
Univ. of Utah

Bruce K. Rubin MEng, MD, MBA, FRCPC
Jessie Ball duPont Distinguished Professor
and Chair, Dept. of Pediatrics
Professor of Biomedical Engineering
Virginia Commonwealth University School
of Medicine

Maunank Shah, MD, PhD
Assistant Professor, Johns Hopkins
University

Dona Upson, MD
Associate Professor
University of New Mexico Health Sciences
Center

Daniel Salerno, MD, MS
Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine,
Tulane University Health Sciences

Dean E. Schraufnagel, MD
Vice Chair for Faculty Affairs
University of Illinois College of Medicine at
Chicago

Mel Spigelman, MD
President & CEO
TB Alliance
New York, New York

Jeffrey Starke, MD
Professor
Baylor College of Medicine

Michael L. Tapper, MD
Director, Division of Infectious Diseases
Lenox Hill Hospital, NY

Dean T. Tsukayhama, MD
Medical Director
Hennepin County Public Health Clinic
Minneapolis, MN

Sten Vermund, MD, PhD
Director, Institute of Global Health
Professor of Medicine
Vanderbilt University School of Medicine

Daniel J. Weiss MD, PhD
Professor of Medicine
Pulmonary and Critical Care
University of Vermont College of Medicine

Jon Warkentin, MD, MPH
Immediate Past-president
National Tuberculosis Controllers
Association

Jonathan M. Zenilman, MD
Professor of Medicine
Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center

Edward Zuroweste, MD
Chief Medical Officer
Migrant Clinicians Network

(Note: affiliations for identification purposes only)