

## U.S. TB Cases Down 2.7 Percent in 2016, but the Rate of Decline Isn't Sufficient to Achieve TB Elimination

On March 24, 2017, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that 9,287<sup>1</sup> new cases of tuberculosis (TB) were diagnosed in the United States during 2016, a decrease of 2.7 percent compared to 2015. The 2016 TB rate of 2.9 per 100,000 (or 29 per million) was 3.4 percent lower than in 2015.

While the total number of new cases was the lowest ever reported for the U.S., epidemiologic models indicate the goal of TB elimination — defined as <1 case per million people — cannot be achieved in this century if the rate of decline continues at the current slow pace.

To accelerate the decline in the number of new TB cases, the CDC recommends that current efforts must be strengthened to prevent the transmission of TB by 1) quickly identifying and treating active cases and 2) placing increased emphasis on diagnosing and treating cases of latent TB infection (LTBI) to prevent progression to active disease.

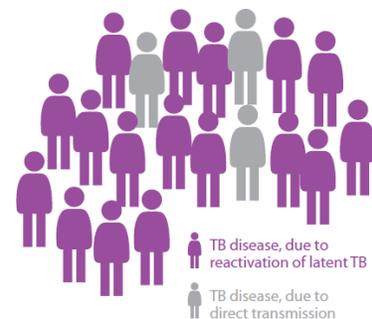
The increased emphasis on LTBI is due to two factors. First, it is estimated that up to 13 million people in the U.S. have LTBI, but treatment is initiated in only several hundred thousand<sup>2</sup> —less than 5 percent — per year. Second, 85 percent of new cases of active TB are in patients who have had untreated LTBI for many years.

Who is tested for TB is also important. CDC recommends that testing be prioritized to persons at high risk of developing active TB disease, including people who:

- Were born in or have lived in countries with high rates of TB;
- Live in group settings such as long-term care facilities, homeless shelters or prisons; and/or
- Are at high risk of progressing from latent infection to active disease because of 1) medical conditions (e.g., HIV infection, diabetes) or medications (e.g., TNF- $\alpha$  inhibitors) that weaken the immune system, 2) exposure to active TB within the past two years, or 3) the use of illegal drugs or alcohol abuse.

Lastly, activities to prevent and treat TB in the U.S. have historically occurred mainly in the public sector. Reaching the goal of TB elimination, however, requires greater collaboration between the public and private sectors, increased efficiency in the prevention and treatment of TB, and expanded resources.

85% of TB diagnoses in the U.S. associated with long-standing, latent TB infection



Source: CDC Fact Sheet "[TB in the U.S.: A Snapshot](#)"

<sup>1</sup> CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, [Vol.66, No. 11, p. 289-294](#)

<sup>2</sup> Sterling TR, Bethel J, Goldberg S, et. al. The scope and impact of LTBI treatment in the U.S. and Canada. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med* 2006; 173: 927-31