



World TB Day 2018 – Progress Towards TB Elimination in the U.S. is Decelerating

The theme for World TB Day 2018, “Wanted: Leaders for a TB-free United States. We can make history. End TB,” was chosen to emphasize the importance of engaging and empowering public health partners, clinicians, and communities to work together to eliminate tuberculosis (TB).

In observance of World TB Day, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that 9,093¹ new cases of TB were diagnosed in the United States during 2017, a decrease of 1.8 percent compared to 2016. The 2017 TB rate of 2.8 cases per 100,000 population (or 28 per million) was 2.5 percent lower than in 2016.

The 2017 TB case count and rate are the lowest on record since reporting began in 1953, but continue to show the decelerating progress towards the goal of TB elimination. In fact, the 2017 TB case rate of 2.8 per 100,000 persons is still 28 times the U.S. TB elimination threshold of less than 0.1 case per 100,000 persons. It will take a consistent, annual decline of 3.9 percent to achieve TB elimination in the U.S. by the year 2100.

Over the past four decades, and again in 2017, the number of TB cases reported in California, Florida, New York and Texas accounted for over half the number of TB cases in the United States. In 2017, 29 states reported a decrease in the number of TB cases and of those, Texas and Florida had the largest drops. Also in 2017, California reported three less cases of TB than in 2016.

Twenty states and the District of Columbia experienced an upswing in the number of cases. The largest increases were seen in New York, with 48 more TB cases in 2017 than in 2016, followed by Tennessee, Nevada, Massachusetts, and Colorado. In Pennsylvania, the number of TB cases increased from 173 in 2016 to 192 in 2017.

Disparities persist between populations affected by TB. In 2017, the overall rate of TB among non-U.S.-born individuals was 15 times that of U.S.-born individuals. Among non-U.S.-born individuals, Asians had the highest TB rate among all racial/ethnic groups, followed by non-Hispanic blacks. In the U.S.-born population, the highest rates were experienced by non-Hispanic blacks, Asians, American Indians and Native Alaskans, and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

To accelerate the decline in the number of TB cases, the CDC continues to recommend strong infection control practices to quickly identify and fully treat cases of TB disease, increased emphasis on testing populations that are at greater risk of TB infection (TBI), and preventing the progression from TBI to active disease through use of shorter treatment regimens, such as 12 weekly doses of rifampentine + isoniazid or four months of rifampin.

¹ CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Vol. 67, No.11, p. 317-323