

World Tuberculosis (TB) Awareness Day

What is TB? TB is a contagious bacterial infection that mainly involves the lungs, but may spread to other organs. World TB Day commemorates the date in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch announced his discovery of the bacterium that causes TB.

While TB can be found in almost every country in the world, 80% of estimated cases occur in 22 developing and countries. (*Singapore is not among these countries and is a very low-risk country for TB.*)

However, TB remains a major global public health problem, with 9.4 million new cases and more than 1.7 million deaths in 2009. In fact, TB is one of the three leading causes of death worldwide due to an infectious disease. Every 20 seconds someone dies from TB.

The United States Government is a global leader in combating TB through programs like President Obama's Global Health Initiative. This initiative is designed to help partner countries improve health outcomes, with a particular focus on improving the health of women, newborns and children.

The United States provides vital global technical leadership to build capacity and improve clinical/operational research to help control TB. United States agencies like the Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention play key roles in these areas.

The State Department, working with the CDC, requires all Immigrant Visa applicants to be screened for TB prior to obtaining a visa.

The World Health Organization, the United States, and countries around the world have marked TB Awareness Day by recognizing the lives and stories of people affected by TB: women, men, and children who have taken TB treatment, medical and public health professionals, researchers, and community workers—all essential team members in the fight against TB.

For more information, visit:

USAID: <http://www.usaid.gov>

CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/tb/>

WHO: <http://www.who.int/tb/en/index.html>