



TBWIRE

THE U.S. PARTNER IN THE GLOBAL
STOP TB PARTNERSHIP

May 2025

GREETINGS!



Hello, everyone! It is an honor to take over as Chair of Stop TB USA. We have been so busy these last months that I forgot to introduce myself. I am a medical anthropologist based at Wayne State University in Detroit, MI, and TB activist who has been working in TB for more than 20 years. I stumbled into TB as a PhD student researching it in Romania and found that it was a problem so large that I did not feel it was ethical to continue as a researcher alone, without working in collaboration with local TB survivors, advocates, policy makers, and medical professionals to try to improve the situation. This included helping to form Romania's Stop TB Partnership and working with the TB Europe Coalition and the Global TB Community Advisory Board to **#EndTB** in the region and globally.

In 2021, I joined the Coordinating Board of Stop TB USA. I am passionate about eliminating TB in the USA and globally; I feel this is only possible through partnerships with TB survivors and affected communities and advocating for human rights-based, person-centered policies in all aspects of the fight against TB.

These are incredibly difficult times, where we are not only fighting TB, but also attacks against public and global health, and even science in general. But we won't despair. The Stop TB USA Coordinating Board is as strong and diverse as ever. The huge turnout for our April TB Hill Day

shows that we and our partners are building momentum. We will work together until we end TB everywhere. You can read more about our Stop TB USA leadership team here <https://stoptbusa.org/leadership-1>. And if you are interested in becoming more involved, please reach out to us at leadership@stoptbusa.org.

- Jonathan Stillo, PhD, Stop TB USA Chair

DC UPDATE

On April 9, 2025, the Tuberculosis Elimination Alliance (TEA), TB Roundtable, We Are TB, and Partners in Health held the annual TB Hill Day in Washington, DC, marking World TB Day and National Public Health Week.

Nearly 300 TB survivors, advocates, including author John Green, and public health experts met with congressional staff in over 200 meetings to advocate for increased TB funding for prevention, education, and research.

Here is our top ask for Congress:

Ask your Representative/Senator to sign tuberculosis funding [Dear Colleague](#) letters for fiscal year 2026 (FY26):

Sample script for your Representative: As your constituent and a public health advocate, I urge you to sign the bipartisan Dear Colleague letter circulated by Reps. Wagner and Bera. It asks appropriators to meet the need-based ask of \$225 million for CDC's TB programs and \$1 billion for bilateral TB programs. The deadline to sign the letter is May 12, 2025. Decades of budget cuts and the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic has led to increasing TB rates and our TB programs being totally overwhelmed. *[Add a sentence about why you care.]* Will your boss



sign the Dear Colleague letter? I look forward to hearing a response. [*Leave phone number or email if you wish to receive a response.*]

Sample script for your Senator: As your constituent and a public health advocate, I urge you to sign the bipartisan Dear Colleague letter circulated by Sens. Young and Rosen. It asks appropriators to increase funding for bilateral TB programs. Since TB anywhere is TB everywhere, we cannot afford the risk of increased rates of transmission or a rise in drug-resistance. Further, we can vastly accelerate the pace of TB elimination by supporting new technologies, like a much-needed point-of-care test and vaccine. [*Add a sentence about why you care.*] Will your boss sign the Dear Colleague letter? I look forward to hearing a response. [*Leave phone number or email if you wish to receive a response.*]

You can access [copies](#) of the actual Dear Colleague letters (and a link to the tracker of who has signed on already [here](#)). Bonus points if you write us at leadership@stoptbusa.org and tell us how your calls went!!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- [2025 U.S. TB Elimination Champions](#)
- [Ministry of Health and WHO commemorate 143rd World Tuberculosis Day: “Yes! We Can End TB](#)
- [Prominent tuberculosis research program at risk of losing federal funding](#)
- [WHO consolidated guidelines on tuberculosis: module 4: treatment and care](#)

Other Opportunities:

- [National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease \(NIAID\) needs volunteers for clinical studies](#)
- [TB Research and Mentorship Program \(TB RAMP\); deadline is May 12, 2025.](#)

TB RESOURCES & REPORTS

- [Global Tuberculosis Report 2024](#)
- [CDC's 2024 Global Health Impact: By the Numbers](#)
- [Digital TB Surveillance System Assessment Report](#)

- [Provisional 2024 Tuberculosis Data, United States](#)
- [Integrated approach to tuberculosis and lung health](#)

TB IN THE NEWS

TB Incidence Reports:

- [What is tuberculosis? What to know after cases confirmed at 2 suburban high schools](#)
- [Tuberculosis case confirmed at suburban Joliet high school. What we know](#)
- [TB Cases Go Undetected In Prisons, Threatening Nearby Communities](#)
- [Tuberculosis outbreak in Kansas City](#)

TB Articles:

- [Public Awareness of Threats to Public Health and Science in March 2025](#)
- [Tuberculosis could end if there's more US public health funding, experts say](#)
- [New handheld device can diagnose TB without a lab in under an hour, its developers say](#)
- [Kansas rolls back public health officials' authority amid TB, measles outbreaks](#)
- [FDA Approves Auto-Pure 2400 for Faster, More Accurate Tuberculosis Diagnosis](#)
- [In 'Everything Is Tuberculosis,' John Green turns his attention to a deadly disease - NPR](#)
- [How Federal Funding Cuts are Undermining Public Health Infrastructure](#)
- [Eliminating Tuberculosis with the Search, Treat, and Prevent Approach for All | Partners In Health](#)
- [We're back: How tuberculosis is set to surge globally once again](#)
- [“Every Death from TB is a Choice”: Brandeis community members join U.S. lobbying day for tuberculosis awareness](#)

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Proud to share a [new publication](#) featuring insights from Stop TB USA Leadership and Coordinating Board on strengthening community engagement in TB research.

TB is deeply shaped by stigma and social determinants of health, yet the research field continues to overlook the voices of those most affected. This study calls for updated TB-specific standards to ensure meaningful, early, and sustained community involvement. Recommendations include community mobilization, bilateral training, equitable compensation, inclusive representation, and

the use of non-stigmatizing language, all essential for more relevant, person-centered, and sustainable TB research.

[Fighting tuberculosis hand in hand: A call to engage communities affected by TB as essential partners in research](#)

- [Public Health Communication Approaches for Building Common Ground](#)
- [Enhanced tuberculosis detection in advanced HIV using stool molecular testing](#)
- [Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Tuberculosis - Cureus](#)
- [A Year in Review on Tuberculosis and Non-tuberculous Mycobacteria Disease: A 2025 Update for Clinicians and Scientists](#)
- [The role of circular RNA in immune response to tuberculosis and its potential as a biomarker and therapeutic target](#)
- [Evaluation of QuantiFERON TB gold plus among TB household contacts in high incidence settings](#)

EVENTS, CONFERENCES, & COURSES

If you're attending the ATS Conference, don't miss this important panel discussion at the International Participants Center (IPC) on **Monday, May 19, from 10:15–11:15 AM**, co-chaired by **Stop TB USA Board Members, Chibo Shinagawa (AAPCHO) and Dr. Sundari Mase..**

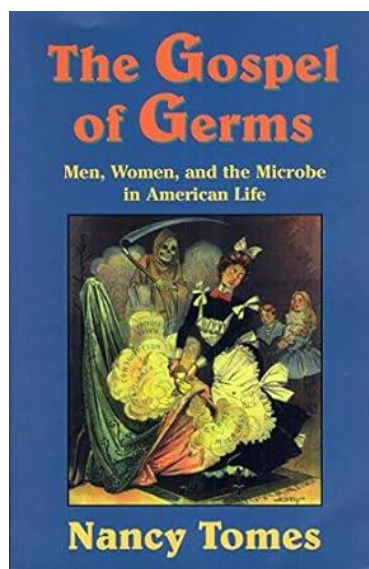
This session, titled “**Engaging the Community to Set TB Research Priorities,**” will feature Dr. Priya Shete (UCSF), whose work centers on improving TB care access and quality in high-burden settings. Dr. Shete will be joined by TB survivor Tenzin Kunor and our Immediate Past Chair, Dr. Cynthia A. Tschampl. The panel will explore how community engagement can improve TB research and implementation.

- [IDAC 39th Annual Southern California Spring Symposium - IDAC 40th Anniversary | May 2-4, 2025 | Huntington Beach, CA](#)
- [Association of Public Health Laboratories \(APHL\) Annual Conference | May 5-8, 2025 | Portland, OR](#)
- [Virtual Webinar: Highlights from NAR | Reframing Directly Observed Treatment | May 7, 2025](#)

- [American Thoracic Society \(ATS\) International Conference | May 16-21](#)
- [Differential Diagnosis of TB and Non-TB Mycobacterial \(NTM\)-related Lung Infections Webinar | May 22, 2025, 1:00 – 2:00 pm ET](#)
- [Monthly |SEATRAC Seminar Series](#)
- [Inaugural Annual WGNV Meeting](#)

TB BOOKSHELF

The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women and the Microbe in American Life by Nancy Tomes



The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women and the Microbe in American Life by Nancy Tomes

Harvard University Press, 1998

ISBN: 9780613919234

The early years of the 20th century saw wide swaths of the American public accept and respond to the germ theory of disease; this era of the “first germ panic” resulted in significant changes in both the domestic and professional health spheres. In *The Gospel of Germs*, Nancy Tomes explores the uptake of the theory, the mechanism of these changes, and their lasting effects in the US.

The tracts, proselytizers, and marketers featured in the *Gospel of Germs* affected change, but the prerequisite was audience belief. But how did germ theory gain acceptance, given that germs are invisible to the naked eye and germ theory differed from centuries of thinking? During this period, fear drove the ongoing need for *any* explanations for and solutions to the illnesses that affected both the lower classes

and those in “whited sepulchers”—including the White House. The new germ theory presented “a curious mix of the familiar and the awesome,” involving more than Koch and Pasteur, leading scientists of their time, lecturing colleagues an ocean away. Those exploring the microbial world used approaches that were familiar to the masses - “air chambers for test tubes from household materials; ...culture media from turnips, herring, or beef tea; and [warming] their microbial broths over a kitchen stove.”

It helped to have the previous generation of popular health heroes, including Florence Nightingale, embrace germ theory. These sanitarians - leading the way to address the health of populations through improvements in the environment and sanitation - had long focused not so much on the cause of sickness but the means of preventing and treating it. They accepted germ theory as a complement, not a competitor, to their cause.

With the sanitarians on board, the next step to behavioral changes came from a pairing of two major forces in American society: religion and capitalism. Germs became evil, satanic, and, like the devil, something to be avoided through strict behavior laid out in the tracts. “The long skirt, the Old Testament beard, and the overstuffed parlor all became symbols of an unsanitary way of life that had to be resolutely left behind in the name of science.” (p. 158) Combined with strictures on food (e.g. not only was the milkman to be clean and well-dressed, but the cows were to be clean and “well-curried”), such guidelines read like an updated Leviticus. Along with the guidelines came products marketed to help enforce the new rules: cellophane to keep food safe, Kleenex (formerly for makeup removal) to blow one’s nose, sanitary napkins (repurposed WWI surgical pads), and toilet paper.

The germ gospel also resulted in increased attention to worker conditions: not out of concern for the underclass (often immigrant or Black), but because they were touching the products they were making, the surfaces of houses they worked in, specifically the bed linens and everything in the kitchen. The chapter “The Two-Edged Sword” describes how the anti-TB efforts of both white and black proselytizers reinforced stereotypes and segregation while yielding positive results: significantly lower TB rates as well as library, school, and park improvements for underserved communities.

Time, world wars, the Great Depression, and the development of antibiotics led to the waning of the movement focused on prevention and containment, but not its cultural eddies. Tomes’s work predates COVID-19; however, in the book’s preface, she attributes the contemporary reaction to diseases such as AIDS and Ebola as impetus for writing. She returns to these diseases in the epilogue, focusing on the shunning of Ryan White, a thirteen-year-old boy who contracted AIDS from a blood transfusion. Many in his community blamed his mother for not keeping the house clean and refused to believe the disease couldn’t spread through casual contact. The availability of treatment and better understanding of how it is transmitted, as well as greater societal acceptance of the afflicted, came with a new breed of proselytizers:

those with equal dedication to science and compassion, a mix that is more essential than ever now in the face of resurgent TB and its drug-resistant strains.

- David Moskowitz, Chair of Media Work Group

Stop TB USA: Where we unite to #EndTB!

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Donate today! <https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/stop-tb-usa>

Stop TB USA

<https://www.stoptbusa.org/>

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