

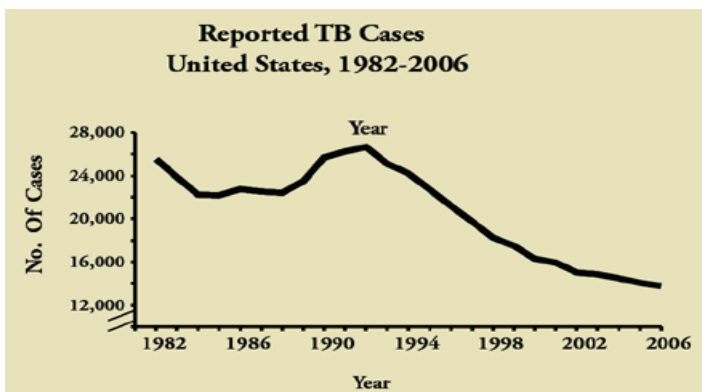
# TB Elimination: Now is the Time!

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**T**uberculosis (TB) is an airborne infectious disease that is preventable and curable. People ill with TB bacteria in their lungs can infect others when they cough. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that one third of the world's population is infected with TB, but the disease lies dormant or inactive in most people and is called Latent TB Infection (LTBI). People with TB disease are sick from active *M. tuberculosis* organisms in their body. People with Latent TB Infection (LTBI) have the TB organism in their body, but are not sick because the germ is lying inactive in their body. However, these people may develop TB disease in the future if their immune system is weakened and persons with LTBI often receive antibiotic treatment to reduce the likelihood of progressing to TB disease.

Many people think that tuberculosis (TB) is a disease of the past — an illness that no longer threatens us today. One reason for this belief is that we are currently experiencing a decline in TB in the United States. We are at an all-time low in the number of persons diagnosed with active TB disease. This success is due to the dedication of state and county TB programs that coordinate care for TB patients and the people they have contact with, utilizing standardized treatment regimens over jurisdictional borders to ultimately reduce the spread of this bacterium

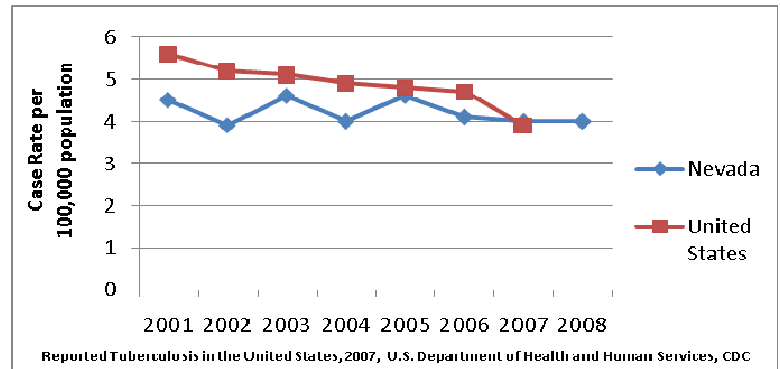
With the success of TB programs in the 1970s and early 1980s, the prospect of ultimately eliminating TB was on the horizon. Due to this, TB control and prevention funding was redirected to other programs. Complacency and neglect of the programs sparked a resurgence of TB, with a 20% increase in new cases reported between 1985 and 1992 (see graph below). As a result of this spike attention was once again directed towards TB prevention and control measures. The successful recommitment to TB elimination efforts has resulted in a steady decline of TB cases from 1993 to present.



Source: 2006 Surveillance Slides. [Slide 2. Reported TB Cases, United States, 1982-2006.](#)

Despite progress experienced nationally, TB remains a massive global public health problem, with nearly 9 million new cases and more than 1.5 million deaths each year. Approximately 72% of Nevada's TB cases occur in the foreign-born population versus 58% nationally. TB will not be a disease of the past until we prevent and control Tuberculosis today!

## Nevada's Case Crude Rate Compared to National Case Crude Rate



The newest caveats in eliminating tuberculosis are the drug resistant forms of TB, which gained attention in 2007 when a multi-drug resistant (MDR) TB patient traveled on several international flights. In the United States, 1.2% of TB cases are drug-resistant and although the multi-drug resistant forms of TB are generally treatable, they do require a more extensive treatment regimen for a longer duration, making financing treatment and patient compliance serious issues which threaten our TB control and prevention efforts.

Now is the time to take decisive actions, beyond our current efforts, that will ensure that we reach this attainable goal and "Stop TB."

### What can be done to Stop TB?

- **Patients can stop TB** by becoming active participants in their own cure and taking all their anti-TB drugs as prescribed.
- **Health workers can stop TB** by staying alert to the symptoms of the disease and providing prompt diagnosis and treatment.
- **Scientists can stop TB** by engaging in needed research to develop new diagnostics, new drugs and new vaccines.
- **Teachers can stop TB** by educating their students about ways they can help to prevent the spread of infectious disease.
- **Communities can stop TB** by sharing information to help prevent the disease and get treatment to those who need it.

**Together, We Can Stop TB- World TB Day March 24, 2009!**

#### References

- <http://www.cdc.gov/tb/WorldTBDAY/default.htm>
- <http://www.who.int/tb/en/>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/tb/default.htm>
- [http://www.who.int/tb/strategy/stop\\_tb\\_strategy/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/tb/strategy/stop_tb_strategy/en/index.html)