

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 19, 2016

President Barack Obama
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write in support of the Administration's final National Action Plan to Address Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis (National Action Plan). The launch of this robust, comprehensive plan to combat multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) is a strong start toward addressing the threat of tuberculosis both at home and abroad, and we urge you to include sufficient funding for this plan in the President's Budget for Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17).

Tuberculosis (TB) has caused more deaths than any other single infectious disease killing more than 1.5 million people each year. In 2014, there were more than 9,400 cases of TB in the U.S. alone. Although there has been a global reduction in TB-related deaths since 1990, more than 4,000 people continue to die from TB every day. It is clear that eradicating this disease – both at home and abroad – requires not only additional focus and collaboration, but also additional resources.

The development and implementation of a robust National Action Plan is a critical first step in combatting this deadly disease. We strongly support the three overarching goals of the National Action Plan: 1) to strengthen our domestic capacity to track and treat MDR-TB in the U.S.; 2) to improve our international capacity and collaboration to combat MDR-TB abroad; and 3) to accelerate basic and applied research and development to bolster our efforts to fight this disease. By pooling resources and expertise from multiple government agencies, the National Action Plan provides measurable objectives and sound interventions to end TB deaths. We are particularly pleased with the inclusion of specific targets described in the National Action Plan for addressing MDR-TB in the U.S. and abroad, as well as a set of targeted interventions.

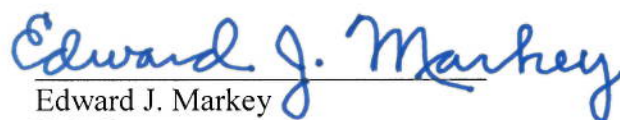
However, the activities described in the National Action Plan are all contingent on receipt of the funding necessary to implement these programs and strengthen our efforts. Implementation of the National Action Plan should be rapid and ambitious. Without an increase in funding, it will be difficult – if not impossible – to quickly execute this plan. This National Action Plan must be accompanied by a funding increase in FY17 for the TB programs at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). If the spread of MDR-TB is not quickly prevented and controlled, TB-related deaths and treatment costs will increase dramatically – potentially reversing 20 years of progress. We urge you to include the funding necessary to fully implement this robust National Action Plan for the TB programs at USAID and CDC in your FY17 budget.

We applaud the administration for taking the first steps toward a National Action Plan, and look forward to working with you on this priority moving forward.

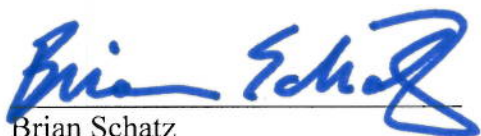
Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown
U.S. Senator



Edward J. Markey
U.S. Senator



Brian Schatz
U.S. Senator



Barbara A. Mikulski
U.S. Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
U.S. Senator



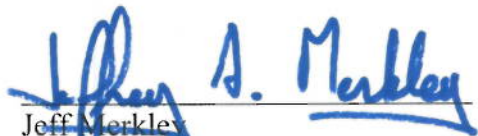
Benjamin L. Cardin
U.S. Senator



Mazie Hirono
U.S. Senator



Barbara Boxer
U.S. Senator



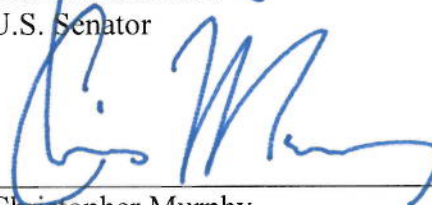
Jeff Merkley
U.S. Senator



Robert Menendez
U.S. Senator



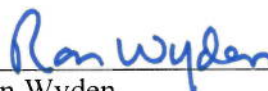
Charles E. Schumer
U.S. Senator



Christopher Murphy
U.S. Senator



Gary C. Peters
U.S. Senator



Ron Wyden
U.S. Senator

CC: Shaun Donovan, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Sylvia Mathews Burwell, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services
John Kerry, Secretary, Department of State
Dr. Tom Frieden, Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Gayle E. Smith, Administrator, United States Agency for International Development
John P. Holdren, Director, White House Office of Science and Technology