



**National Tuberculosis  
Coalition of America**



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My TB Colleagues,

On March 24, 1882, German physician and microbiologist, Robert Koch, announced the discovery of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the bacteria that causes tuberculosis. A century later, in 1982, the global health community recognized March 24 as World TB Day.

**On this day we reflect.** We reflect on the progress made in diagnosing TB infection and TB disease. From Koch's staining method to identify the bacteria, to the development of the Mantoux tuberculin skin test, to interferon gamma release assays, to modern nucleic acid amplification tests. We reflect on the advancements that have been made in the treatment of tuberculosis. Treatment that began with management activities such as rest, fresh air, and good nutrition, to the use of the first effective treatments like isoniazid and streptomycin, to the current four-month regimen of isoniazid, rifampin, moxifloxacin, and pyrazinamide.

**On this day we mourn.** We mourn the countless lives that have been lost to tuberculosis both in our own backyards, across the country, and across the world. We mourn for those families that have lost a loved one to this disease. We mourn for those individuals that do not have access to life saving diagnostics or treatments. We mourn for those who are stigmatized and ostracized for having tuberculosis. We mourn for those that aren't aware that TB is preventable and curable.

**On this day we have hope.** We hope for the future development of a vaccine against tuberculosis. We hope for further advancements in treatment that will decrease both the pill burden and duration of therapy. We hope for continued development of rapid diagnostics for detection of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex and for further development of rapid diagnostics that detect resistance to those drugs used to treat tuberculosis. We hope for equitable access to these treatments and diagnostics for all individuals diagnosed with tuberculosis. We hope for the elimination of stigma around TB and an increase in the awareness surrounding this disease. We hope for increased funding to combat tuberculosis which has resurged as the top infectious disease killer worldwide.

**Today we celebrate.** Given everything that is happening around us and to us as public health professionals, it may not seem like there is much to celebrate. I challenge you to think about that individual whose last dose of medication you gave to complete treatment. Celebrate that. Think about that individual that was diagnosed with TB and started on TB treatment who now has an opportunity to be cured. Celebrate that. Think about those individuals who were exposed to active tuberculosis that you identified, tested, and started on treatment for TB infection. Celebrate that. If

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you are a researcher, think about your research and how it impacts or may one day impact the way we diagnose or treat TB or TB infection. Celebrate that. Think about the numerous individuals you have educated throughout your career who now know how to prevent and treat TB. Celebrate that. Think about all of those individuals who, along with you, are reading this letter and who work each day to fight TB. Celebrate that and know that you are not alone in this fight.

***Today I celebrate each of you.*** For those that have worked in the field of TB for many years, you know the journey has been long and not easy. You have persevered and changed the lives of those around you and your clients. For those that are new to the world of TB, I welcome you and I challenge you to find any other community in public health that is as close-knit, dedicated, and supportive as those of us in the TB community. I encourage each of you to take a moment and remember why you chose public health and why you chose a career in TB. Keep doing what you are doing. Keep advocating for those affected by TB. Keep advocating for more funding and resources. Keep lifting up one another and remember to take care of yourself.

In partnership,



Jason Cummins  
2024-2025 NTCA President