



NEWSLETTER – volume 11 – March 2010

World TB Day 2010

World TB Day on 24th March saw a wide range of activities taking place in Westminster to highlight progress made and the further work needed to eradicate this ancient and curable disease.

The APPG's three chairs co-authored an article on the threat of TB and the challenges posed in tackling the disease, published in the influential House Magazine. Co-chair Nick Herbert MP tabled an EDM about World TB Day with cross party sponsorship. The motion received the support of over 80 members of the Commons. A parliamentary event was also held for MPs, Peers and other stakeholders to discuss TB/HIV co-infection and the rise of multi-drug resistant TB with Kenyan TB advocate, Lucy Chesire, and Kibble Ngaluka, Programme Manager for Sue Ryder Foundation in Malawi.

TB Parliamentary Questions

Numerous Parliamentary Questions have been asked in both the House of Lords and Commons in the last few months. Topics for questions ranged from MDR TB in UK prisons to the replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Details of all questions answered can be found on the APPG website: <http://www.appg-tb.org.uk/parliament.php>

'The Truth About TB' campaign launch

On Thursday 25th February, TB Alert launched 'The Truth About TB' campaign in Parliament at an event chaired by APPG member, Lord Bhatia.

The meeting heard from several speakers including, Dr Ailsa Wight, Deputy Director and Head of TB Programme, Department of Health; Professor John Watson, Head of Respiratory Diseases Department, Health Protection Agency; and Mike Mandelbaum, the Chief Executive of TB Alert.

The Truth About TB campaign is a new initiative to raise awareness about TB among the people most vulnerable to the disease. It brings together PCTs, local authorities and the voluntary sector and uses multi-lingual awareness materials to reach out to the communities most affected by TB. Further information on the campaign is available by emailing info@tbalert.org.



Aparna Barua, coordinator of the UK Coalition to Stop TB, and Kibble Ngaluka deliver the 'TB election asks' to 10 Downing Street on World TB Day.

Beyond Parliament, the UK Coalition to Stop TB produced a list of 'TB election asks' - policies which the Coalition asked the leaders of each of the UK's main political parties to sign up to. A copy of the 'election asks' was delivered to 10 Downing Street and the three main party leaders all made supportive statements on the need to fight TB. The 'TB Election Asks' and World TB Day statements are available on the UK Coalition to Stop TB website at www.stoptbuk.org.



New APPG Coordinator

Debbie Laycock has now sadly left as the Coordinator of the APPG. We wish her all the best in her new role on VSO in north east India.

In her place, Mike Smith has taken over as the new Coordinator of the Group. Mike started work on the 22nd February and has been busy getting to grips with the work of the APPG and learning the ropes. You can contact Mike by email at mike@results-uk.org or by calling him on 020 74998238.

Peers Debate Tuberculosis

In the lead up to World TB Day, Peers in the House of Lords debated TB policy on two separate occasions following oral Parliamentary Questions from two APPG members, Baroness Sharples and Baroness Masham.

Baroness Sharples asked the Government Minister, Baroness Thornton, about national standards for tuberculosis treatment to measure PCTs against. This was followed by a wide ranging debate with, for example, Lord Dubs asking about efforts to raise awareness of TB among groups most at risk from the disease and Baroness Tonge asking about TB vaccination.

On World TB Day itself, Baroness Masham of Ilton asked the Minister about the Government's efforts to combat drug-resistant TB in the UK and abroad. She also highlighted the new national strain-typing service soon to open and the need for better TB treatment facilities in the UK. During the discussion which followed, Lord Alderdice asked about continuation of treatment for prisoners once they leave custody. Further questions were asked about global funding for TB, the risk to healthcare workers of contracting tuberculosis, immigration and TB, and the important role of good nutrition in fighting the spread of the disease.

Full transcripts of the questions, responses and discussions are available via links to Hansard from the APPG on Global TB's website at www.appg-tb.org.uk/parliament.

Kenyan HIV/TB advocate in Parliament

On the eve of World TB Day, APPG members and other interested Parliamentarians gathered to hear from two leading African advocates on TB/HIV co-infection. Kenyan TB advocate, Lucy Chesire, spoke first. She has suffered personally from HIV/TB co-infection and gave a powerful address on surviving the disease and coping with treatment, as well as how policy and resources need to improve to address TB and the wider issues surrounding the disease. Lucy also spoke about the problems of diagnosis for multi-drug resistant TB in Kenya, where until recently testing for MDR TB was done in Australia due to a lack of laboratories in Kenya for diagnosing MDR-TB.



Kenyan TB advocate, Lucy Chesire

The meeting also heard from Kibble Ngaluka, Programme Manager for Sue Ryder Foundation in Malawi. Kibble spoke on the need for better communication, information and education about TB, as well as the problem of stigma attached to those with the disease acting as a barrier to people seeking treatment.

APPG Annual General Meeting

Parliament has been dissolved ahead of the coming General Election.

When Parliament returns the group will need to hold an AGM – this will take place on Wednesday 2nd June, 4 – 6pm in Westminster. For further details, please contact mike@results-uk.org.uk

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Tuberculosis

For more information visit: www.appg-tb.org.uk

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