



January 14, 2008

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
455 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Brown:

I am writing on behalf of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) to endorse the Comprehensive Tuberculosis Elimination Act of 2007 (S. 1551).

The past year has seen growing evidence of public concern spurred by multidrug resistant tuberculosis (MDR TB) and extensively drug resistant tuberculosis (XDR TB). Local health departments (LHDs) serve as the front line defense for TB identification and control. MDR and XDR TB require more intensive efforts to control and monitor and therefore take more resources at the local level, in addition to routine TB control efforts.

NACCHO supports increased federal funding for the tuberculosis detection and control activities of local health departments. Several of the provisions in your bill address functions that are carried out by LHDs. Local health departments are integral to preventing, detecting and treating tuberculosis, particularly among populations such as those with documented health disparities, foreign-born persons in the United States and other high risk populations and settings. In addition, targeted testing and treatment of latent tuberculosis infection and drug-resistant tuberculosis and public education to raise awareness of about this disease are carried out at the local level. We applaud the attention and support your bill would provide to these important local public health functions.

The funding authorized by your bill will also promote research into new tools for the elimination of tuberculosis, including drugs, diagnostics, vaccines, and public health interventions, such as directly observed therapy and non-pharmaceutical intervention. We also appreciate the inclusion of local health officials on the Advisory Council for the Elimination of Tuberculosis.

Thank you for introducing the Comprehensive Tuberculosis Elimination Act of 2007. We look forward to working with you to support the work of local health departments to combat this disease.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick M. Libbey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "L" at the end.

Patrick M. Libbey
Executive Director

