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June 8, 2007

Honorable Members of the California Legislature,

I am writing on behalf of the California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) to request an increase in tuberculosis (TB) control funding in the amount of \$2,000,000 for fiscal year 2007-2008. If funding cannot be increased in the current budget cycle, there must be an increase in 2008-2009.

Current federal, state and local funding contributions are not adequate to provide the resources necessary to ensure the control of TB in our communities across California. California TB Control programs have already borne a 10% cut in funding since 2005 and now, per notice from the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control's Division of TB Elimination, are facing additional 5% cuts per year for the next 5 years! The state TB control program and local public health departments across the state are struggling with inflation and budget cuts that continue to strain ability to contain TB.

California still experiences close to 3,000 cases of TB each year (more than Texas and New York put together). Each of these cases requires extensive case management services to ensure cure and to prevent transmission of the disease. As well as effectively working with each TB patient, each case of TB requires a thorough contact investigation to identify and treat anyone who may have acquired TB infection from the patient before they develop and transmit the disease to others.

We cannot adequately protect the health and wellbeing of our communities from the ongoing threat of TB and the growing risks of multi-drug resistant (MDR-TB) and extremely drug resistant TB (XDR-TB) without an increase in state contribution. As we work nationally to stabilize federal funding for TB control, we must ask you for assistance in adequately funding our California infrastructure in order to assure that control of transmission of TB in communities throughout California is not compromised, by adequately funding our state and local TB control programs.

We need you to support our request, so that we can continue to sustain our public health infrastructure's ability to effectively control TB in California. Without adequate funding, our public health infrastructure will be further dismantled and we will (as history has taught us in the late 1980's and early 1990's), face a deadly resurgence of TB, with increased outbreaks of MDR-TB and XDR-TB. We are responsible to you, the communities we serve and protect, and to each and every Californian, not to let this happen. We are asking you, in the face of certain federal budget cuts, for an additional \$2,000,000 in TB control funding, so we may continue to retain control over TB in California.

Sincerely,

(Original signed by:)

Glennah Trochet, MD
CCLHO President

Copy: Sandra Shewry, Director, California Department of Health Services