

Health Unit Media Release



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World TB day is held each year on March 24 and is intended to promote awareness, knowledge and motivation for action against TB.

The Global Plan to Stop TB 2006 - 2015

Think about these numbers...

The Disease

- 6 million people die every year due to HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria; 2 million of these deaths are due to TB.
- TB is curable - drugs are available - but this disease continues to kill 5,000 people a day.
- 98% of TB deaths are in the developing world affecting mostly young adults in their most productive years.
- Globally TB is still growing at 1% a years - due to the rapid increase in Africa. Intense control efforts are helping the number to decrease or stabilize in other regions.

The Infection

- 2 billion people are infected with the TB bacillus. They have the infection but are not sick with active TB disease.
- Drugs to treat the infection are available so that it does not become active and cause a person to become sick with the disease.
- 1 in 10 infected people will become sick with active TB disease if they are not treated.

The Good News

- The World Health Organization has developed a global STOP TB strategy.
- The G8 world leaders in 2005 committed themselves to fighting TB in Africa.
- On January 27, 2006 the Global plan to stop TB received a \$600 million boost from Bill Gates through the Gates Foundation. This was in addition to the 300 million already committed making a total pledge of \$900 million over the next 10 years. Other funding to fight this epidemic will come from governments and will add up to \$56 billion over the next decade. The plan has a two-track approach to Stop TB: Maximize the benefits of applying the existing tools for TB control and developing new tools (diagnostics, drugs and vaccine).

Locally

- The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit provide, free drugs for the treatment of the disease and the infection. We also provide Mantoux testing a skin test, to detect exposure to TB and infection. In 2005, 229 Mantoux tests were performed and read. The majority of these tests were required as a pre-employment test and were negative. The people who tested positive were referred to their family doctor for further testing to rule out active tuberculosis disease. The family doctor would also assess whether the person should be on drugs to treat latent tuberculosis.

You can read more about tuberculosis on the Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit website www.healthunit.org <<http://www.healthunit.org>>

As with all diseases we must think globally and act locally.