



For immediate release
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**Treatment Action Group Receives \$4.7 Million from the Gates Foundation
to Expand TB/HIV Research & Treatment Advocacy**

*- Project to empower AIDS activist groups to work towards universal access to
TB and HIV diagnosis and treatment among people with HIV, and accelerate research
on new TB drugs, diagnostics, and vaccines -*

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New York – The Treatment Action Group (TAG) announced today it has been awarded a four-year, \$4,736,587 grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to expand its TB/HIV Advocacy Project and strengthen global responses to the overlapping TB/HIV epidemics. The grant will enable TAG to lead community activist efforts to help ensure universal access to TB and HIV diagnosis and treatment by the year 2010; conduct advocacy to triple funding for research on new TB tools needed by people with HIV; and integrate community activism into TB policy and research globally, in Africa, and in the United States.

Javid Syed, TAG's TB/HIV Advocacy Project Director, said: "This generous grant will allow TAG to expand our work in TB/HIV advocacy and strengthen the involvement of the HIV activist community in TB control and research, which is essential because tuberculosis is the leading co-infection causing illness and death among people with HIV around the world. As the recent upsurge in extremely drug resistant (XDR) TB in southern Africa has shown, HIV and TB are a deadly combination, and poorly performing TB treatment programs represent a threat to HIV antiretroviral treatment scale-up programs worldwide."

TAG will coordinate TB/HIV community advocacy with the Stop TB Partnership, UNAIDS, and WHO to improve TB/HIV policy and scale up collaborative TB/HIV activities, and train and support African TB/HIV community advocates to participate effectively in supporting national scale up. TAG will also educate U.S. leaders about the need to significantly increase funding for TB/HIV research, and help ensure that affected communities are actively involved in TB research.

To achieve this, TAG will increase its TB/HIV project staff and strengthen partnerships with policymakers, researchers, and advocates globally, in the USA, and in Africa. TAG will also sponsor global and African workshops, and publish workshop reports, a TB/HIV advocacy toolkit, advocacy updates, case studies on effective TB/HIV programs, research reports, and resource mobilization plans.

Since 2002, TAG has conducted a series of international TB/HIV advocacy workshops in conjunction with AIDES, the International Union Against TB and Lung Disease (IUATLD), the Open Society Institute (OSI) Public Health Watch, the Stop TB Partnership, and others. Over 300 activists have been trained and mobilized to become advocates for better program integration and service delivery for people with HIV-related TB, especially in areas with high HIV and TB rates, such as Africa and south and southeast Asia.

(more)

TAG's Executive Director, Mark Harrington, said: "TB control comes from a very traditional public health perspective, which in the past has excluded or disempowered people from taking control over their own health. At the same time, it has made significant strides in expanding effective TB treatment programs in very poor countries, by using standardized and simplified treatment regimens similar to those now being adopted for the treatment of HIV in resource-poor settings. The HIV community has, by contrast, always insisted on the empowerment of people with HIV as central players in taking control of their own health, advocating for better prevention and treatment policies at the national and international levels. What has become clear from the first years of TAG's TB/HIV Project supported by the Gates Foundation (2004-2006) is that much greater collaboration and program integration are needed to control HIV-related TB, and that the world needs to at least triple its investment in TB research and development in order to discover and develop the new tools – diagnostics, drugs, and vaccines – necessary to control and ultimately to eliminate TB."

For more information please visit TAG's website at www.treatmentactiongroup.org or www.aidsinfonyc.org/tag/tbhiv/tbhiv.html.

About TAG. Founded in 1992 and based in New York City, the Treatment Action Group fights to find a cure for AIDS and to ensure that all people living with HIV receive the necessary treatment, care, and information they need to save their lives. TAG focuses on the AIDS research effort, both public and private, the drug development process, and health care delivery systems. We meet with researchers, pharmaceutical companies, and government officials to encourage exploration of understudied areas in AIDS research and speed up drug development, approval, and access. We work with the World Health Organization and community organizations globally, and strive to develop the scientific and political expertise needed to transform policy. TAG is committed to working for and with all communities affected by HIV.

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