

ATS Convenes World TB Day Events with Partners

The ATS cosponsored a series of events on Capitol Hill with partners including the National Tuberculosis Controllers Association (NTCA), TB Alliance and RESULTS this week to commemorate World TB Day. On March 20, over 20 TB survivors and advocates from around the country traveled to Capitol Hill to participate in the third annual “TB Survivors Hill Day.” TB survivors from states including California, Colorado, Michigan, Alabama and Vermont met with their congressional delegations to call for increased funding for global and domestic TB programs at CDC and USAID and increased TB research and development at CDC, NIH and BARDA (Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority).

At noon on March 20, the ATS and partners convened an educational briefing in the U.S. House of Representatives for congressional staff entitled, *Tuberculosis: The Leading Global Infectious Killer*. The briefing was hosted by House TB Elimination caucus co-chairs Reps. Eliot L. Engel (D-NY), Gene Green (D-TX) & Don Young (R-AK). The speaker panel included:

- **Diana Nilsen, M.D.**, Director of Medical Affairs, Bureau of Tuberculosis Control, NYC DMHMH and President, National TB Controllers Association
- **Kristen Virdone**, TB Survivor
- **Cheri Vincent**, Chief, Infectious Diseases Div., Bureau of Global Health, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
- **Philip A. LoBue, M.D.**, Director, Div. of TB Elimination, National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, CDC

TB survivor Kristen Virdone gave a moving account of her struggle with tuberculosis diagnosis and treatment and called for more funding for TB programs to eliminate the disease. ATS member Diana Nilsen, M.D., who chaired the panel, described the challenges that state TB control programs face in controlling and preventing community transmission of the disease in the face of significantly reduced federal funding.

On the evening of March 20, ATS and partners held a reception on Capitol Hill to honor TB Caucus co-chair, Rep. Gene Green (D-TX), for his leadership on TB legislation and funding. Rep. Green is retiring at the end of this Congress. Nuala Moore, Associate Director of Government Affairs in the ATS Washington Office presented Rep. Green with an award from the Tuberculosis Roundtable, the DC-based TB policy coalition co-chaired by the ATS, for his leadership on TB policy.



From right to left: Philip A. LoBue, CDC, Kristen Virdone, TB Survivor, Cheri Vincent, USAID, Diana Nilsen, NTCA & ATS, Nuala Moore, ATS Staff



Nuala Moore, ATS Washington Office staff presents TB Caucus co-chair Rep. Gene Green (D-TX) with TB Champion Award.