



THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO Tuberculosis Advocacy

“If access to health care is considered a human right, who is considered human enough to have that right?”

- DR. PAUL E. FARMER

LEFT: Mphatso Tsoka, a senior biomedical engineer with PIH Lesotho, walks through Maseru with fellow staff members during the Global Day of Action, honoring Dr. Paul Farmer's legacy. *Photo by Mpho Marole / PIH*



How to Eliminate TB

Some catastrophes are beyond our control—tuberculosis (TB) is not one of them. This airborne disease is both preventable and curable. A simple combination of pills, taken over several months, can wipe out the infection. We have the tools to track, test, and treat it. We know how to stop its spread. So why is TB still the deadliest infectious disease worldwide?

The short answer: injustice. In the United States, there are **2.5 cases of TB per 100,000 people**; in **Lesotho**, that number **climbs to 724**. This gap has nothing to do with science—it's about access to care. Millions fall ill with TB each year because of where they live. **But this crisis can be stopped.** PIH teams worldwide help people receive lifesaving TB treatment and survive months of care.

 Join us in turning outrage into action—because no one should die from a curable disease. 

What is TB?

TB is caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, a bacterium that primarily affects the lungs. Left untreated, it can spread to other parts of the body, causing a persistent cough, fever, and weight loss.

The bacterium spreads when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or speaks. While anyone can contract TB, individuals with weakened immune systems—due to conditions like HIV, diabetes, or malnutrition—are at significantly higher risk.

RIGHT: Leoncio Carrión was able to access life-saving oxygen therapy because of oxygen plant repairs completed in Ascope, Peru. Photo by José Luis Diaz Catire / PIH



TB'S GLOBAL IMPACT*

Affecting millions each year, TB remains the world's deadliest infectious disease—claiming more lives than HIV and malaria combined. Here's a snapshot of the latest global data in the fight to eliminate TB.



1.25 million

lives lost
each year



10.8 million

of infections
each year



75%

of cases detected
of assumed total



88%

cure rate for those starting
treatment in 2022 and
completing in 2023

**As reported from the WHO 2024 Global TB Report*

Health is a human right—not a privilege. PIH provides TB testing, treatment, and care for patients worldwide. From mobile clinics and modern medicine to social support and advocacy, we're proving TB can be beaten. ***What's missing is the global will to end it indefinitely.***

Help us and our partners—including non-profits, academics, advocates, governments, Nerdfighters, and many more—demand collective action, stronger health systems. Together, we fight for a world free from TB.

STEP 1

Educate yourself



STEP 2

Recruit friends

STEP 3

Gather resources

STEP 4

Use your power

STEP 1

Educate Yourself

To fight TB effectively, we must first understand it. Learning about the disease, its impact, and systemic barriers to care equips us to challenge injustice and demand change from those in power. Fueled by optimism and action, the more we learn, the stronger our movement grows—and the harder we can push for health equity.

Read, watch, and learn

Study reliable global health sources to gain a deeper understanding of how systemic inequities fuel poor health outcomes in impoverished communities.

- [Tuberculosis: The Preventable Disease That Still Kills Millions](#)
- [Advocate to #ENDTB with the StopTB Partnership](#)
- [TB or Not TB: Dr. Salmaan Keshavjee](#)
- [Harvard Medical School's Guide to Fighting Tuberculosis](#)
- [Bending the Arc, a Documentary](#)

Follow along on social

Stay informed about the latest news in the fight against TB. By sharing credible stories, research, and statistics, you raise awareness and amplify advocacy actions to end this disease.

- Instagram: [TB Fighters](#) | [Survivors Against TB](#) | [StopTB](#) | [PIH](#)
- YouTube: [Vlogbrothers' Barely Contained Rage: An Open Letter to Danaher and Cepheid](#)

STEP 2

Recruit *Friends*

Getting your friends involved is one of the most powerful ways to expand the movement to end TB. Every conversation you have with others further exposes the injustices denying people access to lifesaving TB care. Together, we can push for policies that move us toward a reality where death due to this curable disease is a tragic relic of the past.

Create a social media movement

Connect with others who share your desire to advance health equity. By sharing personal stories and information, you can inspire action and rally support for the fight to eliminate TB.

Launch a demonstration

Protests command attention and hold leaders accountable. They shine a public spotlight on urgent global health crises—like TB—and offer a powerful way to grow your network and mobilize for change. When we stand together and speak out, we amplify the call for immediate action.

Organize a grassroots campaign

Grassroots movements, like PIH Engage, a network of students and professionals across the U.S., empower individuals to advocate for health equity, mobilize communities, and push for health policy reforms—such as in successful campaigns for HIV/AIDS treatment and COVID-19 vaccine access.

- [Join a PIH Engage Team](#)
- [Check out the online community of activists, TBFighters](#)

STEP 3

Gather *Resources*

Improved tools to detect and treat TB—such as AI-enhanced, portable digital X-ray machines and cutting-edge epidemiological mapping—offer hope in eliminating this killer. But without the resources to scale these innovations equitably, millions will continue to go undiagnosed and untreated. Between 2023 and 2030, an estimated 43 million people will develop TB, leading to 6.6 million preventable deaths and deepening cycles of poverty and injustice. Closing this gap requires urgent investment to ensure that every person affected by TB has access to the care they need.

Donate

Donating to nonprofits like PIH keeps hospitals running, provides care packages for TB patients, covers transportation to treatment centers, and much more. Your contribution helps us deliver high-quality health care and prevent senseless deaths for 8 million patients globally.

Fundraise

Help raise critical resources by organizing a community fundraiser, launching an online donation drive, or hosting a charity auction. Each dollar brings us closer to easier access to treatment for patients, stronger health systems, and an end to TB.

Engage

Every contribution is invaluable. Whether you advocate, donate, or spread awareness, your action helps propel this movement forward. Sustainable engagement, in whatever form you choose, is what drives progress. Our combined efforts create the lasting change TB patients urgently need.

STEP 4

Use *Your Power*

While clinicians and researchers fight TB, advocates play a vital role in elevating policies that recognize health as a human right. PIH and partners have won victories for patients by pressuring pharmaceutical companies to waive patents on essential drugs and lower prices on diagnostics, making treatment more affordable. By standing up together for health as an inalienable right, we confront systemic inequalities and demand that every person, no matter where they live, has access to TB care.

1 Learn how movements influence policymakers

For 40 years, PIH has advised governments and global health agencies in the fight against TB. Advocacy shapes legislation, with representatives sponsoring bills that support health policy reforms.

socialpresskit.com/takeaction

2 Contact your congressional representatives

Email or call your representative to push for legislation that removes barriers to TB care and advances the movement to end this curable disease for everyone, everywhere—forever.

PIH.org/act-for-aid

TO DISCOVER MORE, VISIT **PIH.org/TB**

