Ordering Information
Copies of the *Forging Partnerships to Eliminate Tuberculosis: A Guide and Toolkit*, are available from the Division of Tuberculosis Elimination’s online ordering system at www.cdc.gov/tb. The publication number is 00-6552.

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Dear Colleague:

Tuberculosis (TB) is one of the leading causes of death from infectious disease worldwide. An estimated 2 billion persons — one third of the world’s population — are infected with the bacteria that cause TB. Each year, approximately 9 million persons become ill from TB; of these, almost 2 million die.

Yet, many people in the United States think that TB is a disease of the past—an illness that no longer threatens us today. One reason for this belief is that, in the United States, we are at an all-time low in the number of new persons diagnosed with active TB disease. However, the rate of decline has slowed in the past two years, and inequities persist in racial, ethnic, and foreign-born groups. Will this success make us vulnerable to the neglect that has historically come with declining numbers of persons suffering with TB, or will it provide us with the opportunity to accomplish our goal, the elimination of TB in this country?

Now is the time to take decisive actions, beyond our current efforts, that will ensure that we reach this attainable goal. Building and strengthening partnerships is one of those decisive actions. This country’s unprecedented progress in controlling TB in recent years will not be sustainable without strengthened collaborations with local, state, national, and international partners from all sectors of our society. This kind of partnership action must be taken in order to reach those at highest risk for TB, and to identify innovative strategies to collaborate with them to improve testing and treatment among high-risk populations.

There is a great deal of work that remains to be done:

• Despite the decreased case rate among foreign-born persons, more than half of the TB cases in the United States in 2005 occurred in this population, and the case rate was almost nine times greater in this population than among U.S.-born persons.

• For substance abusers, the homeless, and others at risk who are often hard to reach, community-based organizations, neighborhood health centers, and private providers need to be enlisted to help identify undetected TB cases and latent TB infection as well as encourage treatment.

• TB rates among people born in the United States differ remarkably by race. In 2005, rates among non-Hispanic blacks remained more than eight times higher than rates

• Low-incidence areas in the United States need continued support to ensure that they maintain the capacity and expertise to respond to TB outbreaks when they occur.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Advisory Council for the Elimination of Tuberculosis (ACET), an external advisory group to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Director of the CDC, have long recognized the moral obligation as well as the public health benefit of eliminating TB in this country. Supported by the conclusions in the Institute of Medicine (IOM) report Ending Neglect: The Elimination of Tuberculosis in the United States, ACET and CDC believe eliminating TB in the United States is a realistic goal and have a plan by which to do so. Both groups are committed to this goal and recognize that success will require collaborating with others.

We hope this document, Forging Partnerships to Eliminate Tuberculosis: A Guide and Toolkit, will foster the kinds of collaborations needed to make TB elimination a reality.

Sincerely,

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Table of Contents

1. About the Guide and Toolkit ........................................................................................................ 1
   What’s Inside the Guide .................................................................................................................. 1
   Making the Guide and Toolkit Work for You .............................................................................. 2

2. What Your Colleagues Say about TB Partnerships .................................................................... 5
   TB Partnership Benefits ................................................................................................................ 5
   Things to Keep in Mind .................................................................................................................. 6
   Relationship Building: Lessons Learned ...................................................................................... 6

3. What Successful Health-Related Community Partnerships Have in Common ....................... 9
   Use a Mutual Selection Process when Recruiting Partners ...................................................... 9
   Encourage Size and Value Diversity .......................................................................................... 10
   Recruit Partners Who Are Leaders within Stakeholder Populations .................................. 10
   Understand and Address Motivational Issues of Potential Partners ...................................... 11
   Establish Ground Rules (Codes of Conduct) ............................................................................. 12
   Embrace a Common Vision ....................................................................................................... 12
   Develop Commitment through Leadership .............................................................................. 13
   Committed Core Leadership .................................................................................................... 13
   Organizational Driver .................................................................................................................. 14
   Leadership Delegation .............................................................................................................. 14
   Create Decisionmaking Protocols ............................................................................................. 14
   Social Control ............................................................................................................................ 15
   Project Selection ........................................................................................................................ 15
   Credible Commitment ................................................................................................................ 15
   Building Ownership .................................................................................................................... 16
   Anticipate and Manage Conflict .............................................................................................. 16
   Conclusion .................................................................................................................................. 17

4. How Well Do You Know Your Environment? ........................................................................ 19
   Demographic Information on Your Program Area ................................................................. 19
   Epidemiological Profile of Your Program Area ...................................................................... 19
   Information on Your Program Area’s At-Risk Populations ................................................... 22
General Background Information .................................................................................................22
Information Specific to Your Program Area ..................................................................................23
Understanding Primary Care Providers in Your Program Area ...................................................25
Comparing Your Data to Your Area’s TB Program .......................................................................26
Identifying and Understanding Additional Stakeholders ..................................................................27
Related Resources ..........................................................................................................................28
Cultural and Linguistic Competence Tools and Resources ...............................................................28
TB Program Assessment and Training Resources ............................................................................29
Additional Publications ..................................................................................................................30

5. Determining Your Purpose and Choosing Partners .................................................................31
Your Partnership’s Overall Purpose ...............................................................................................31
Types of Partnerships You Will Use .................................................................................................31
Level of Support for Partnering within Your Agency ......................................................................34
  Tips and Strategies .........................................................................................................................34
  Things to Keep in Mind ..................................................................................................................34
Resources You Can Dedicate to Your Partnering Efforts ................................................................34
  Tips and Strategies .........................................................................................................................34
Characteristics of Effective Partners ...............................................................................................35
  What Is a Good Partner? ..................................................................................................................35
  Things to Keep in Mind ..................................................................................................................36
Recruitment of Effective Partners ..................................................................................................36
  Things to Keep in Mind ..................................................................................................................37
Related Resources ..........................................................................................................................38

6. Creating a Sense of Ownership .................................................................................................41
Step 1: Create Your Partnership’s Culture ....................................................................................41
  Research Suggests .........................................................................................................................41
  Tips and Strategies .........................................................................................................................42
Step 2: Consistently Share Information .........................................................................................42
  Research Suggests .........................................................................................................................42
  Tips and Strategies .........................................................................................................................43
  Things to Keep in Mind ..................................................................................................................43
7. Making Progress and Making Decisions: Structure and Decisionmaking Issues

Partnership Structure: An Overview ................................................................. 51
Research Suggests .......................................................................................... 51
Things to Keep in Mind .................................................................................. 52
Creating Partnership Structures That Fit Your Needs ..................................... 52
Creating Decisionmaking Processes that Fit Your Needs ................................ 53
A Step-by-Step Approach for Collaborative Decisionmaking ....................... 54
Anticipating and Managing Differences ........................................................ 55
Tips and Strategies ........................................................................................ 57
Related Resources ......................................................................................... 59

8. Sustaining Longer-Term Partnerships .......................................................... 61
Recognize and Reward Partners ................................................................... 61
Things to Keep in Mind .................................................................................. 62
Combine Planning with Action ....................................................................... 62
Things to Keep in Mind .................................................................................. 62
Create a Learning Partnership ................................................................. 63
Related Resources ......................................................................................... 63

9. Sharing the Message: Working with the Media and TB Stakeholders .......... 65
Common Formats for Accessing the Media .................................................... 66
Meetings with Editorial Boards ...................................................................... 66
Press Briefings ............................................................................................... 67
Press Conferences ......................................................................................... 67
Media Advisories ........................................................................................... 68
Press Releases ............................................................................................... 68
Public Service Announcements (PSA) ........................................................... 68
Feature Stories ........................................................................................................... 69
Op-Ed Pieces ............................................................................................................. 69
Letters to the Editor ................................................................................................. 69
Public Access TV Stations ...................................................................................... 70
Media Interviews (Television, Radio, and Print Media) ........................................... 70

Checklist for Conducting a Press Conference ...................................................... 70
Articulate a Compelling Reason for the Press Conference .................................... 70
Identify, Recruit, and Prepare Press Conference Speakers .................................... 70
Assemble the Necessary Materials ....................................................................... 71
Ensure Journalists Attend ..................................................................................... 71
Follow Up and Follow Through .......................................................................... 72

Social Marketing with TB Stakeholders ................................................................. 72
Related Resources ................................................................................................. 73

10. Preparing Your Partnership to Communicate During a TB Outbreak ............... 75

Communication Planning for TB Outbreaks ......................................................... 75
The Pre-Event Phase ............................................................................................... 75
Conducting a TB Outbreak Communication Needs Assessment ........................ 76
Developing a TB Outbreak Communication Plan ............................................... 77
Determine the Resources Needed to Carry Out the Plan ..................................... 80
Preparing the Partnership to Carry Out the Plan ................................................ 81

The Event Phase ................................................................................................... 82
The Post-Event Phase ............................................................................................ 82
Related Resources ................................................................................................. 84
Risk Communication Websites ............................................................................ 84
Risk Communication Training ............................................................................ 84

11. Evaluating and Measuring Success ................................................................. 85

The CDC’s Recommended Evaluation Framework .............................................. 85
What is the CDC Framework for Program Evaluation? .................................... 86
A Collaborative Approach to Evaluation .............................................................. 88
Things to Keep in Mind ......................................................................................... 89
Related Resources ................................................................................................. 89