



Dear Global Partners:

Lymphatic filariasis (LF) is one of the world's most disabling and economically costly tropical diseases. A parasitic disease caused by worms that are spread by the bite of infected mosquitoes, LF causes tremendous suffering to individuals in the form of chronic pain, severe and irreversible disfigurement, and social stigmatization. The disease affects more than 120 million persons worldwide, and more than one-fifth of the global population is at risk of acquiring LF.

CDC has identified eliminating LF as a winnable battle. With additional effort and support for evidence-based, cost-effective strategies that we can implement now, we can have a major impact on LF elimination in the Americas.

In 2000, the World Health Organization called for the global elimination of LF by 2020. This initiative is driven by a two-fold, evidence-based strategy to 1) interrupt the spread of infection through mass drug administration campaigns, and 2) reduce the suffering of persons currently or previously affected by filarial disease. This strategy has already proven to be effective and the progress in Latin America is particularly promising.

CDC partners with endemic countries and global experts to develop program strategies that can dramatically reduced the rates of LF worldwide. Today, 53 countries have ongoing programs to eliminate LF. In 2011, only Guyana, Haiti, and limited areas of Brazil and the Dominican Republic remain as regions in the Americas where people are being newly infected with LF. These four countries are all scaling-up their programs to reach the 2016 target date for elimination in the Americas.

These elimination programs are critical to protect the health of more than 1.3 billion persons who are still at risk of becoming infected with LF. CDC is strongly engaged in the elimination efforts, and CDC and its partners are committed to meeting the 2020 goal of elimination. With additional effort and support, we can win the battle of eliminating LF first from the Americas, and then the world.

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., M.P.H.
Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention