FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 17, 2020

National Network Aims to Eliminate Tuberculosis Across At-Risk Communities  
Inaugural National Summit to Convene TB Experts

WASHINGTON – The Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO), Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF), Hepatitis B Foundation (HBF), and Stop TB USA, with the support of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), successfully launched the “Tuberculosis (TB) Community Engagement Network (CEN)” initiative last July to bring attention and action to eliminate TB among Asian American (AA), Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (NHPI) communities at risk. To celebrate this launch, the TB CEN will be hosting its first annual 2020 TB Summit and convening from November 18 to 19.

In 2019, more than 8,900 cases of TB were reported in the United States, however, Asian and Pacific Islander persons continue to be impacted by TB at a greater rate compared to other racial and ethnic groups. Pacific Islander populations have the highest TB incidence rate of 17.6 cases per 100,000 persons, and Asian populations have the second highest TB incidence rate of 16.7 cases per 100,000 persons\(^1\). To address these TB incidence inequalities, the TB CEN aims to conduct outreach to underserved AA and NHPI communities most affected by TB; increase awareness and understanding of culturally and linguistically appropriate latent TB infection (LTBI) and TB testing and treatment strategies; share resources and best practices among providers; and develop partnerships to scale existing initiatives.

“The TB Community Engagement Network is an opportunity for local coalitions and national partners to collaborate and work toward eliminating tuberculosis among populations at greatest risk,” Jeffrey B. Caballero, MPH, executive director of AAPCHO added. “This network ensures that those affected by LTBI are tested and provided with the cultural and linguistically appropriate health care they need.”

“Like many communities of color, including Black and Indigenous communities, AAs and NHPIs have higher rates of certain preventable diseases such as tuberculosis and latent tuberculosis infections. A mix of poverty, immigration-based barriers, lack of cultural competency and language access barriers prevent our community from eliminating

"Tuberculosis," said Juliet K. Choi, chief executive officer of APIAHF. "Our partnership with the CDC and national and local partners in forming the Tuberculosis Community Engagement Network will work to address these issues and provide access to critical information to eliminate tuberculosis in at-risk communities."

"Latent tuberculosis infection and hepatitis B are both serious public health priorities that disparately impact AA and NHPI populations," said Kate Moraras, MPH, deputy director of public health at the Hepatitis B Foundation. "We are proud to be part of the TB Community Engagement Network and appreciate collaborating with TB community partners to align efforts and build our public health and health care system's capacity to increase LTBI awareness, testing, and treatment."

"Stop TB USA is proud to be a national partner of the TB Community Engagement Network," said Ed Zuroweste, MD, founding medical director of Migrant Clinicians Network and a board member of Stop TB USA. "It is well known now that a disproportionate number of AAs and NHPIs have both active TB disease and LTBI. We need to assure that this community has ready access to all of the TB expertise on a local, state and national level and Stop TB USA is ready to lead the charge to make sure that happens."

"Ending TB in the United States requires a dual approach of maintaining and strengthening current TB control priorities while increasing efforts to test and treat latent TB infection," said Philip LoBue, MD, FACP, FCCP, Director of the CDC Division of Tuberculosis Elimination. "We need new partnerships to reach our goal of elimination. CDC looks forward to working with the TB Community Engagement Network to raise awareness in communities disproportionately affected by TB, promote LTBI testing and treatment, and engage with healthcare providers."

The inaugural members of the TB CEN include community health centers, community-based organizations, coalitions, health agencies, and academic institutions located in the states with highest TB incidence rates. The members demonstrate TB and LTBI expertise in community outreach, clinical research, and providing culturally and linguistically appropriate testing and treatment for vulnerable AA and NHPI populations. The inaugural members of the TB CEN are as follows:

- Arkansas Coalition of Marshallese (Springdale, AR)
- Asian American Health Coalition dba HOPE Clinic (Houston, TX)
- Asian Services in Action, Inc. (Akron, OH)
- California Department of Public Health, TB Free California (Richmond, CA)
- Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Inc. (Atlanta, GA)
- Community Clinic (Akron, OH)
- Eastern Michigan University, Center for Health Disparities Innovation and Studies (Ypsilanti, MI)
- Florida Asian Services (North Miami, FL)
- Hep Free Hawaii (Honolulu, HI)
In an effort to directly support community providers, the TB CEN successfully launched its first Mini-Grants Program in October. The Mini-Grants Program funded a total of ten organizations to increase awareness and build provider capacity on LTBI/TB testing and treatment. The awarded organizations are as follows:

- Arkansas Coalition of Marshallese (Springdale, AR)
- Asian American Community Services (Columbus, OH)
- Asian American Health Coalition of the Greater Houston Area, dba HOPE Clinic (Houston, TX)
- Asian Services In Action, Inc. (Akron, OH)
- Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Inc. (Atlanta, GA)
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (Denver, CO)
- Fort Bend County Clinical Health Services (Rosenberg, TX)
- North East Medical Services (Daly City, CA)
- San Diego County Medical Society Foundation, dba Champions for Health (San Diego, CA)
- UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland (Oakland, CA)

For more information and to become a member of the TB CEN, visit tb-cen.aapcho.org or contact tb-cen@aapcho.org.

About AAPCHO
AAPCHO is a national association of community health organizations dedicated to promoting advocacy, collaboration and leadership that improves the health status and access of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in the United States, territories, and freely associated states. For more information on AAPCHO, please visit www.aapcho.org.

About APIAHF
The Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF) influences policy, mobilizes communities and strengthens programs and organizations to improve the health of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

About Hepatitis B Foundation
The Hepatitis B Foundation is the nation’s leading nonprofit organization solely dedicated to finding a cure for hepatitis B and improving the quality of life for those affected worldwide through research, education and patient advocacy. To learn more, go to www.hepb.org, read our blog at www.hepb.org/blog, follow us on Twitter @HepBFoundation, find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/hepbfoundation or call 215-489-4900.
About Stop TB USA
Stop TB USA is leading the way to a world without tuberculosis (TB), a disease that is curable but still kills three people every minute. Founded in 2001, Stop TB USA’s mission is to serve every person who is vulnerable to TB and ensure that high-quality treatment is available to all who need it. Our role is to ensure a bold vision for addressing TB and to coordinate and catalyze global efforts towards the elimination of the disease.

About CDC National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention
CDC works 24/7 protecting America’s health, safety and security. Whether diseases start at home or abroad, are curable or preventable, chronic or acute, or from human activity or deliberate attack, CDC responds to America’s most pressing health threats. CDC is headquartered in Atlanta and has experts located throughout the United States and the world.

Contact
Kristine Cecile Alarcon, MPH, (510) 671-5054, kalarcon@aapcho.org

###