November/December Partnership Update:

Changing of the Guard: John Seggerson retires and Sue Etkind Steps Up as New Executive Director

After serving as the volunteer Executive Director of Stop TB USA for almost 11 years, and a TB advocate since 1965, John Seggerson has decided to “retire”. John’s contributions to Stop TB USA (then the National Coalition for the Elimination of Tuberculosis or NCET) began in 1992. At that time, tuberculosis (TB) cases were increasing in the United States, and a few areas were experiencing worrisome outbreaks of multidrug-resistant TB. The coalition was organized to help address these domestic TB control challenges. John was one of the original steering committee members and was, in partnership with the American Thoracic Society, instrumental in the creation and mobilization of the group’s efforts. There were 83 founding members representing 58 different organizations from public health, health care, and professional medical organizations and Congressional health committees, all united by their concern about TB. Early on, John led the way as coalition members took an active and productive role in educating members of Congress regarding the threat of TB here and abroad.

In 2007, John, as Executive Director of NCET, was also operating “behind the scenes’ to help orchestrate a retreat held in Atlanta, where NCET Steering Committee and coalition members voted unanimously to change the group’s name to Stop TB USA. This was done to help align the coalition with its "Stop TB" partners in other countries and to give focus and clarity to the mission of the organization. Its initial task was to develop an updated TB elimination plan and in 2009, with John’s facilitation and Dr. Randall Reves direction, “A call for Action on the TB Elimination Plan for the United States” was released. This was the culmination of much work and collaboration of Stop TB USA and other partners, and it spells out the needed efforts to address the current and future challenges of TB elimination in the United States. Stop TB USA is operates under the auspices of the American Thoracic Society and the expert guidance of Fran Du Melle.

John’s advocacy work over the years has impacted TB patients, governmental and non-governmental agencies, students, legislators, the media and the public at large. John’s career has been a testimony to the value of providing an advocacy vision, promoting visibility and maintaining the momentum to keep TB in the forefront.

Fortunately for Stop TB USA, John will remain involved and will support the new Director, Sue Etkind and the officers, as Stop TB USA moves forward in our efforts to work with our partners to eliminate tuberculosis from the U.S. and globally.
Ms. Etkind also has been a TB advocate throughout her career. Sue retired in June after serving since 1984 as Director of the Division of TB Prevention & Control for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. She is widely known and respected in TB circles domestically and globally. Sue received her diploma in nursing from the Concord Hospital School of Nursing and her nursing degree from Fitchburg State College. She graduated from Russell Sage College with a master's degree in health education. Sue has served on the National Advisory Committee for the Elimination of Tuberculosis (ACET), and has been a consultant for numerous organizations including the former Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, the Centers for Substance Abuse Treatment, the American Lung Association, the Centers for Disease Control, and the American Thoracic Society. She has held positions in the Nursing Section of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Other Lung Diseases and in its North American region and is a former President of the National TB Controllers Association. Ms. Etkind was also a recipient of the Lillian Wald Public Service Award presented by the American Public Health Association, and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the North American Region of the UNION. She has written extensively on the public health aspects of tuberculosis control and has been involved in Stop TB USA from its’ inception as the National Coalition to Eliminate TB (NCET).

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Sue and John toasting the “Transition”