

Thursday,  
24  
March 2022

# WORLD TB DAY



## Executive Director's Statement

Today we join the world in commemorating the World TB Day (WTD) under the theme **'Invest to End TB. Save Lives.'**

Every year, we commemorate WTD on March 24 to raise public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of tuberculosis (TB) and to step up efforts to end the global TB epidemic.

TB remains one of the world's deadliest infectious killers. The World Health Organization reports that each day, over 4100 people lose their lives to TB and close to 28,000 people fall ill with this preventable and curable disease. According to the Global Tuberculosis Report 2021, efforts to combat TB have saved an estimated 66 million lives since the year 2000.

The COVID-19 pandemic has reversed years of progress made in the fight to end TB. For the first time in over a decade, TB deaths increased in 2020. Zimbabwe is among the countries with the highest burden of TB-HIV and multi-drug resistant (MDR) TB - with more than 1000 new cases per year for HIV-associated TB and rifampicin-resistant TB (Global Tuberculosis Report 2021).

Zimbabwe Health Interventions (ZHI) through its Accelerated and Comprehensive HIVCare for Epidemic Control in Zimbabwe (ACCE) program thrives to end TB through investing in TB prevention and treatment initiatives that impact people living with HIV (PLHIV).



Dr Taurayi Tafuma  
ZHI Executive Director



Tuberculosis is the most common cause of morbidity and mortality among HIV-infected persons. This year, ZHI will focus on generating demand for uptake of a shorter preventive therapy for TB called 3HP which the country has adopted in its efforts to control the epidemic. Historically, clients received 6 months of daily Isoniazid to prevent TB which has had low uptake due to the increased pill burden. The new shorter treatment regimens include 3HP and three months of daily Rifampicin plus Isoniazid (3HR). 3HP is taken once a week (12 3HP doses as opposed to 180 doses of ITP). These new regimens are not only taken for a shorter duration with less doses, but they also have less side effects and are more tolerated by clients.

With support from PEPFAR through USAID, the ZHI ACCE program initiated 18 689 people living with HIV on TB preventive therapy from October 2021 to February 2022. To further improve the uptake of the shorter treatment regimens for TB prevention among PLHIV, the ACCE program trained a total of 223 healthcare workers in Midlands and Manicaland provinces in the month of March 2022.

ZHI commits to ensuring access to TB preventive treatment to STOP TB infection from turning into a disease.

Together we can END TB.