THE UNION NORTH AMERICA REGION IN 2017

VANCOUVER HOSTS THE 21ST CONFERENCE OF THE UNION NORTH AMERICA REGION

Tuberculosis (TB) in minority populations was a major theme at the 21st Conference of The Union North America Region Conference in Vancouver, Canada from 22–25 February. Hosted by Union Organisational Member, British Columbia Lung Association, the conference brought together 300 delegates from the region.

Stephen Lewis, the co-founder and co-director of AIDS-Free world, presented the keynote lecture in which he examined the present state of TB, drawing comparisons with the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and forecasting the future of global public health in the era of Donald Trump as US President. He asked why we are still seeing slow progress in tackling TB, despite so many new and promising initiatives, and he considered what can be done.

Professor Madhukar Pai, Director of the McGill Global Health Programs, delivered the George Comstock Lecture, which focused on not only increasing TB care, but emphasising the delivery of quality services.

“Our conferences are forums that bring groups together and enable the discussion of issues; informing government policies and agendas. These are platforms that are both locally relevant and yet a major force in global conversations about lung diseases and, by extension, public health.”

JOSÉ LUIS CASTRO
The Union’s Executive Director, spoke about the impact of The Union Region Conferences worldwide and the contribution that our members make in organising these events.
KNOW

- The STREAM trial, which is evaluating the effectiveness of shorter treatment regimens for multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB), held community engagement activities at Stage 2 STREAM sites in Ethiopia, Georgia, Moldova, Mongolia, South Africa, and Uganda. The STREAM trial is a multi-centre international randomised controlled trial implemented by The Union, Vital Strategies and other global partners.

- In May 2017, Stage 2 of the STREAM clinical trial enrolled its 100th patient in Durban, South Africa. Kwanele enrolled in the trial after recognising the night sweats and persistent cough he was having to be symptoms of TB. The outcome of the trial will generate important evidence to guide global treatment guidelines for MDR-TB.

SHARE

- The Union’s Training and Education department held over 47 courses and has trained over 800 public health professionals working for governments and non-governmental organisations in 54 different countries, in clinical and operational TB and MDR-TB management, tobacco control, project management, networking and partnerships, budgeting and finance, grant writing, strengthening health systems, monitoring and evaluation, supply chain management, and leading management teams.

- As a lead partner in the Bloomberg Initiative (BI) to Reduce Tobacco Use, The Union presented its tobacco control work at a meeting in New York in February, 2017. Achievements of the last 10 years and future plans for providing technical support to governments and civil society were presented. The University of Illinois in Chicago joined the partnership as an expert team specifically to support tobacco tax policy development.

ACT

- To mark World TB Day, more than 20 TB survivors met with leaders on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, to share their experiences with those who have responsibility for determining the U.S. government’s response to TB both in the U.S. and worldwide. Supported by The Union, these meetings stressed the importance of supporting the scale up of the delivery of TB services, aggressively tackling drug-resistance, and ensuring sufficient funding for research and development needed for better drugs, diagnostics, and vaccines.

1 Name has been changed