

Tuberculosis (TB) in San Diego County

What is tuberculosis?

Active tuberculosis (TB) is a disease caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. TB usually affects the lungs and spreads through the air when a person sick with TB coughs. Not everyone infected with the bacteria becomes sick. Those that have been infected but are not sick have latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI). Persons with LTBI can become sick with active TB in the future if they are not treated.

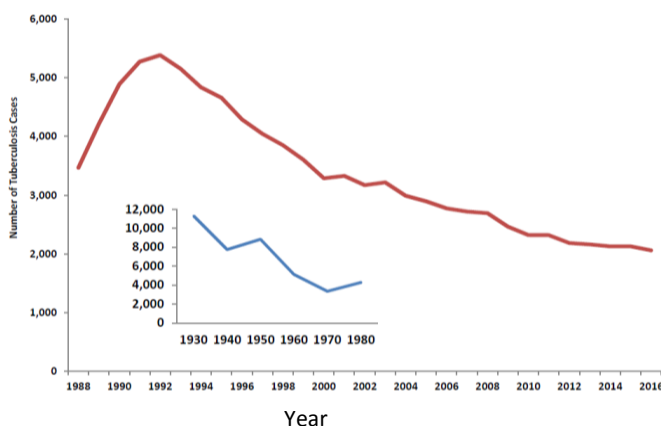
The human toll of tuberculosis

- In 2017, San Diego County reported 237 new active TB cases, compared with 258 in 2016.
- In 2017, San Diego County's annual TB incidence was 7.1 cases per 100,000 persons, which is higher than the California state rate of 5.2, and more than twice the national rate of 2.8.
- Children under age five are at the highest risk of severe complications including brain and spinal involvement that can lead to lifelong disability.

Public health efforts and improved living and health conditions have resulted in a decline in TB

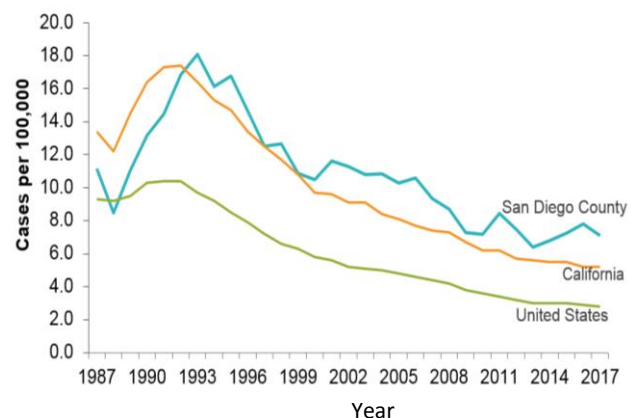
- Tuberculosis cases have declined over the last century, but have leveled off in recent years.
- An estimated 80% of active TB cases are due to progression of LTBI to active TB.
- About 170,000 San Diegans have LTBI, which can progress to active TB without treatment. *This is two thirds the size of Chula Vista's population.*

Number of California TB Cases 1930 – 2016



Source: California Department of Public Health

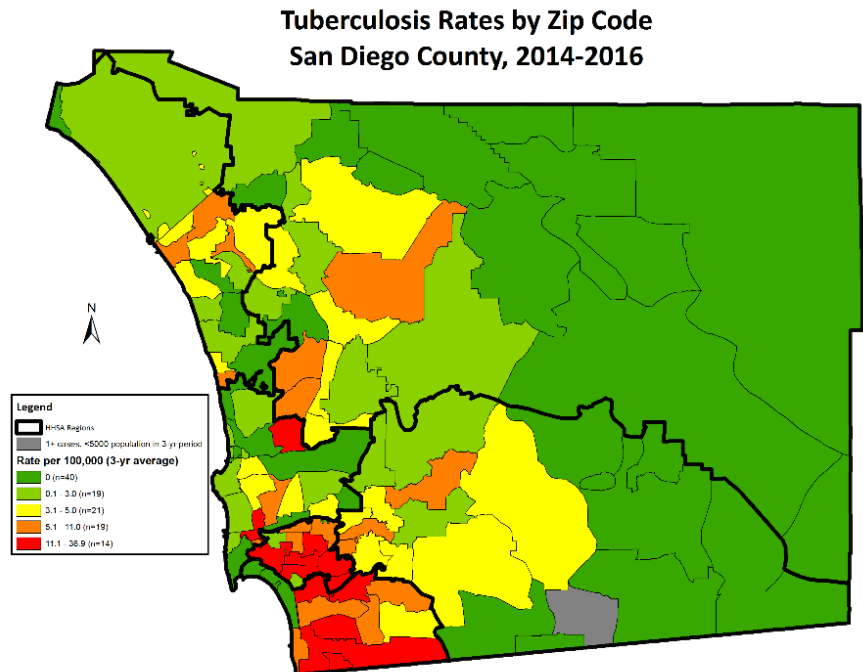
Comparison of TB rates, 1987 - present



Source: County of San Diego TB Control

Demographics of tuberculosis in San Diego County

- In 2017, 74% of San Diego County TB cases occurred in persons who were born outside the U.S.
- The TB rate among persons born outside the U.S. (22.0) is 8 times higher than the rate among U.S.-born persons (2.6).
- In 2017, the most common medical risk factor was diabetes (27%).



Source: County of San Diego TB Control

How can tests for tuberculosis be used to prevent the spread of TB?

- Of the estimated 170,000 San Diego County residents with LTBI, only 20% are aware of their infection and only 12% have been treated.
- Because an estimated 80% of cases arise from reactivation of LTBI, treating LTBI can prevent many TB cases in San Diego County.
- In the last decade, there has been widespread adoption of **more accurate blood tests** to diagnose LTBI which are more specific than the traditional TB skin test, resulting in fewer false positives.
- In 2016 the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force – national experts who provide widely accepted evidence-based medical recommendations – newly recommended targeted screening for LTBI in **populations at risk**.
- New **short-course treatment** regimens for LTBI are better tolerated by patients, less expensive, and more likely to be completed by patients.
- Treating individuals for LTBI reduces the risk that they will later develop active tuberculosis.