

WHO's TB Director: Disease Can Rival AIDS

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WASHINGTON, District of Columbia (UPI)-Dr. Paul Nunn, coordinator for tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS for the World Health Organization (WHO) is lobbying members of Congress for increased funding for worldwide disease-control efforts. Nunn explained that TB has been hugely under-addressed. Its death rates are very comparable to HIV death rates and are slightly above malaria's, yet it is considered number three on that list. He cited British Prime Minister Tony Blair's visit to Washington earlier in the week, where he mentioned malaria, global warming, and AIDS, but not TB. Nunn talked about the link between HIV and TB and the need to deliver health services in a more efficient manner. Specifically, there is a need for collaboration between TB programs and HIV programs. According to Nunn, the key TB control method is preventing TB in the first place. The most cost-effective way of keeping TB low is investing in TB control in the countries from which immigrants originate. He believes that while the US Congress has been quite generous in terms of TB funding, it pales in comparison to HIV/AIDS funding. He notes that in the US there was a de-investment in TB programs in the late 1970s, leading to a resurgence of the disease in the late 1980s and early 1990s. When things improve, investment evaporates, and there is a resurgence.