

TB advocates get support to work in their communities



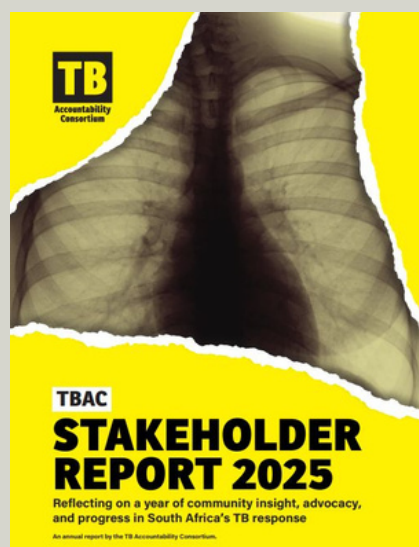
Community dialogue at Glebelands Hostel, Umlazi, KZN

In the country's ongoing fight against TB, community-led advocacy remains one of the most powerful tools to increase awareness. They encourage early testing and support treatment adherence.

While policies and strategies matter, the impact is often only seen once they are implemented in communities. And often this requires talks in communities led by people who understand TB not just as a disease, but as a lived experience. Recognising this, this year TBAC introduced the a support programme designed to strengthen grassroots TB advocacy by placing TB champions at the centre of community engagement. The initiative provides TB champions with financial support, tools and resources to raise awareness, educate communities and mobilise action on the ground. Through the project, champions were engaged to lead community gatherings on TB education, share their personal journeys with TB and host weekly community dialogues across the country. The programme focused on bringing TB information directly to communities, ensuring that people understand the signs and symptoms of TB, the importance of early diagnosis and the need to complete treatment.

By sharing their lived experience and helpful information, the champions reached community members in ways that formal health messaging often cannot.

[Access the full story here](#)



This year TBAC has released its first stakeholder report. The report marks a new chapter for TBAC, capturing a year of community driven advocacy, accountability efforts and progress in South Africa's TB response.

[Download the report here](#)

TBAC's advocacy agenda for 2025 was packed



Prof Nazir Ismail, HOD of Clinical Microbiology and infectious diseases at Wits University

TBAC National Convening

Social and economic barriers, including nutrition challenges and costs associated with accessing care, continue to put people at risk. This was stressed at the TBAC's third annual national convening where experts, government officials and activists discussed progress, persistent gaps and strategies to help strengthen testing, treatment and outreach. Speakers emphasised that while diagnostics and data systems are strong, many patients are still missed due to gaps in follow-up, treatment and support.

[More on this here](#)

SANAC Civil Society Forum engagement

Health experts are calling for stronger community-focused TB and HIV outreach in the country as rising costs put pressure on clinics and limit resources for testing, treatment, and care. Even with progress, including TB treatment coverage at 79% in 2023, about 54,000 people still die from TB each year, over half of them living with HIV. The CSF engagement hosted by TBAC stressed that targeted testing and community-focused interventions are needed to prevent further loss of life.

Read the article [here](#)



Anita Marshall, Director at Training for Transition

Western Cape TB summit



Khayelitsha community members, researchers, activists and professional healthcare workers at the summit

The Western Cape TB Summit put a spotlight on men falling through the cracks in the country's TB response. Community members raised concerns that men are still not being reached with the information and support they need. While testing and treatment services have improved, gaps in outreach and clinic access mean many men are still missing out, highlighting the urgent need for targeted strategies to reach and support them.

[Read more here](#)

Tracking TB with the newly launched End TB public-facing dashboard

The country has taken an important step in strengthening its TB response with the launch of the End TB Campaign's public-facing dashboard, a digital platform that tracks TB testing data in near real time across the country. Developed by the National Department of Health with the NICD and NHLS, the dashboard provides transparent, accessible data to track progress towards testing five million people for TB, helping communities, health workers and policymakers identify gaps and drive action to end TB.



Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, Minister of Health

[Read the full story on the site](#)



Photo by: South African National AIDS Council

Regional leaders from across the Southern African Development Community (SADC) also expressed support, emphasising the importance of collaboration in accelerating progress to end TB in South Africa and the whole region.

Parliament recommits to ending TB

South Africa's parliamentarians reaffirmed their commitment to ending TB with the relaunch of the country's TB Caucus. The caucus brought together parliamentarians as champions in the fight to tackle TB, the country's deadliest infectious disease which claims 56,000 lives each year.

As part of the launch, parliamentarians signed the Barcelona Declaration, renewing their pledge to strengthen political commitment, accountability and investment in the TB response.

[Access the full statement here](#)

The Union Conference on Lung Health 2025

TBAC attended the 2025 Union Conference on Lung Health, which took place in Copenhagen this year, highlighted real progress in the global fight against TB. The conference discussions focused on diagnostics, new generation technologies, testing,

vaccines and innovative treatment approaches. Presented at the conference, the Global TB Report 2025 introduced a new categorisation of TB across more countries, elping the world focus not just on the 30 high-burden nations. South

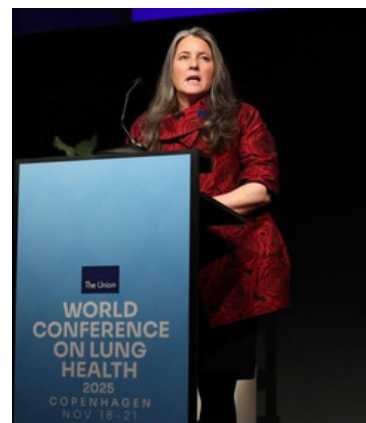


Photo by: International Union on TB and Lung Health

Africa sits in Category 2, indicating that TB remains highly endemic, while social protection coverage stands at around 75%, above the global average of 52%.

UHC Day 2025: Unaffordable health costs? We're sick of it!

South Africa joined the global commemoration of Universal Health Coverage Day 2025 with a renewed focus on the financial burden many South Africans face when accessing healthcare. Under the theme "Unaffordable health costs? We're sick of it," government and policymakers emphasised the need for health reforms, including the implementation of National Health Insurance, to meaningfully reduce out-of-pocket spending and strengthen primary healthcare.

Speakers warned that rising costs and barriers to care continue to leave many behind, pointing to the need for universal health coverage to deliver quality care that is accessible, affordable and centred on people's lived realities.



Thembi Nkomo, TB champion at the UHC Day 2025

[Read the full story here](#)

2025 health allocations leave HIV/TB services under strain

2025 Health Financing Outlook: *Pressure is increasing, capacity declining*

A briefing to the NCOP Appropriations Committee on the 2025 MTBPS, Division of Revenue Amendment Bill & Adjustments Appropriation Bill

Russell Rensburg, RHAP and TBAC



Since the 2025 MTBPS was tabled, South Africa's public health system has come under increasing pressure as funding tightens and real per-capita resources decline.

Rising demands in HIV and TB treatment, combined with allocations that do not match service needs, threaten to reverse progress achieved over the past 15 years. Clinics, laboratories, medicines and staff are all affected, making it difficult to maintain existing service levels, let alone expand capacity to meet growing health demands.

This was one of the key messages shared with members of the National Council of Provinces and the Standing Committee on Appropriations during parliamentary submissions, urging policymakers to look closely at whether the 2025 health allocations are sufficient to safeguard basic services.

These services are relied upon by 85% of South Africans, and without adequate funding, both HIV and TB programmes face risks that could have long-term consequences for health outcomes across the country.

[WATCH THE SUBMISSION HERE](#)

Keep reaching out to us

Throughout the year we have been receiving feedback from you about the work we do. Here's the latest message we got:

I really enjoyed the article talking about TB infection rates, it is really good that these infections have decreased across mining sectors and have increased only across the gold mining sector. I think it is time to conscientise relevant stakeholders about increase public health interventions pertaining to mining.

The slow decline of TB does not eliminate other risk factors that make it possible for other diseases to ravage mine workers and their communities. We need to realise that the realities for mining communities in terms of public health are different from other mining communities, and specific environmental health issues may contribute to the continued health issues faced by mine workers. After all, a worker's health cannot be maintained by health and safety programmes, other public health interventions besides testing for chronic illness can help further curb the infection rate for TB.

Tsetsanyana Mokoena

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Share your TB story, by scanning this QR code and telling us your TB experience.

We would love to hear from you to continue the conversation. Visit our social media platforms or drop us an email to info@tbac.org.za

SPEIG!



Robert Matthews, TB survivor from Cape Town

For the past two years, our Sitshele campaign has been a space for people across South Africa to tell us how TB has affected them and their loved ones.

This year, the campaign expanded. Alongside Sitshele, we introduced Speig in Afrikaans and Thetha in IsiXhosa and South Africans showed up, sharing their experiences and realities of living with TB. Robert Matthews was diagnosed with TB in 2020 and is one of the people that shared their TB journey with us.

These voices remind us why community stories matter in the fight to end TB.

Thank you for your continued support!

T B A C W I S H E S Y O U

HAPPY HOLIDAYS