

Project Title: Sharing approaches to tuberculosis care and prevention among two California counties, the State of California, and Baja California in Mexico
Grant ID #: 70628

This project has shown that binational collaborative efforts, such as this one, are not only possible, but can work successfully to improve overall care and treatment completion for binational cases.

Key Accomplishments:

- Memorandum of agreement (MOA) in final revision stage between the following key partners: State of Baja California, Secretariat of Health, the County of San Diego, department of Health & Human Services, the County of Imperial, Public Health Department, the International Community Foundation, and Puentes de Esperanza Contra Tuberculosis
- Puentes de Esperanza Contra Tuberculosis, A.C. registered as a legal nonprofit in Mexico and formalized its board of directors, in order to continue the work of collaborating closely with governmental agencies in both Mexico and the U.S. to assist with multi-drug resistant TB case management, continuity of care, contact investigation and cross-border reporting and public advocacy
- Brought together Imperial and San Diego counties to consider new ways to collaborate for binational patients

Next steps:

- Final revision and signing of MOA
- Site visit to the Grupo Sin Fronteras project in Texas, to share models and key lessons learned with another binational tuberculosis project
- Puentes de Esperanza- obtain needed legal status in Mexico to provide tax-deductibility for its Mexican donors
- Strategize on how to raise funds for ongoing binational TB work



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Puentes de Esperanza: Working to Cure MDR-TB in Baja California

What is Puentes de Esperanza?

Puentes de Esperanza is a program in Tijuana that cures multidrug-resistant forms of tuberculosis (MDR-TB) in Baja California. The Puentes program was originally sponsored by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), but when its funding was eliminated, the International Community Foundation (ICF) stepped in to ensure that the program and patient care continued. It is ICF's goal to establish Puentes de Esperanza as its own nonprofit in Tijuana, so that the program may be expanded and continue to offer hope to TB patients in Baja California.

Why is Puentes important now?

The State of Baja California is the Mexican state with the highest incidence of TB with 49 cases per 100,000 in 2010. The elevated incidence of TB in Baja California contributes to increased TB risks for neighboring California. The California-Mexico border region is particularly vulnerable to the growing incidence of MDR-TB. In Baja California, there were 25 known cases of MDR-TB in 2010. In San Diego, California, there were 44 cases of MDR-TB over the past decade, two thirds having been born in or having close ties to Mexico. It is important to address this risk in order to protect our bi-national community from this deadly disease.

What are the future goals for Puentes?

The immediate goals of the program are to formalize cross-jurisdictional sharing arrangements between government agencies on both sides of the border and to establish Puentes as its own nonprofit in Tijuana, Mexico. Additionally, a key goal is to expand the care of Puentes to include more patients, as well as integrate new Video Directly-Observed Therapy (VDOT) techniques with its new academic partner, UCSD Medical School. ICF will continue to work with the Puentes team to provide care to our neighboring city!

**For more information, call us at (619) 336-2250, or visit: www.icfdn.org
To donate to Puentes, visit: <http://icf-xchange.org/puentes/>**



**Center for Sharing
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Rethinking Boundaries for Better Health

The Puentes de Esperanza program is an initiative managed by the Center for Sharing Public Health Services with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.