

CENTRAL COUNTY

CONTRA COSTA TIME

Friday, December 1, 2006

ContraCostaTimes.com

Volume 95, Number 184

50 cents

Tuberculosis problem

I'm sure today, World AIDS Day, there will be memorial services to remember those who have died from AIDS and rallies to promote more funding for AIDS prevention. I'm also sure that most of those memorials and rallies will be so near-sighted as to fail to note that it's another disease that actually deals the killing blow.

AIDS destroys the immune system, but by itself it can't kill its victims. For most AIDS victims in the world, what they actually die from is tuberculosis.

The President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is also near-sighted. Nearly all its money goes to programs fighting AIDS alone and very little to TB. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria does a much better job saving AIDS victims because the fund supports programs fighting TB and AIDS.

It's past time Congress gets its eyes fixed and fully appropriate the \$1.2 billion budgeted for the Global Fund in 2007. Otherwise, we'll only see more people dying of these treatable diseases. And Congress should also call on the head of PEPFAR to shift more of its resources to fight TB.

Jim Driggers
Concord