The objectives of this program are to reduce the incidence of tuberculosis and improved the quality of life in Belize.

Specific Objectives:

- 85% cure rate for pulmonary TB by the end of 2004 based on the cure rate established for the year 2002
- Detection and 30% reduction of Non-pulmonary TB and multidrug-resistant TB by the end of 2004 in relation to the rate established for the year 2002
- 100% completion of therapy by all Extra Pulmonary TB cases by end of year 2004

Description of Program:

The National Tuberculosis Program, a Preventative Public Health Program, is a methodical approach of the Ministry of Health towards alleviating, and in the long term eliminating, suffering due to this disease. It is a planned activity aimed at making full and rational use of the technical knowledge and health resources available. In the prevention and control of Tuberculosis this program utilizes strategies such as: Information, Education and Communication, Diagnosis and Treatment, Contact Tracing and Surveillance.

Main Activities:

- Information, Education and Communication: This strategy involves public education as well as continuing education for healthcare workers utilizing different mediums including workshops. Leaflets, posters, radio and televisions form part of the medium for education.
- Diagnosis: Healthcare workers in all six districts have been trained to diagnose Tuberculosis based on Medical History (Clinical Symptoms), X-ray, Tuberculin Skin title and Bacteriologic Examination (Sputum).
- Treatment: Treatment regimens have an initial (intensive) phase lasting 2 months and a continuation phase usually lasting 4-6 months. During the initial phase, consisting usually of 3 or 4 drugs, there is rapid killing of tubercle bacilli. Infectious patients become non-infectious within about 2 weeks. Symptoms improve. The vast majority of patients with sputum smear-positive TB become smear-negative within 2 months. In the continuation phase fewer drugs are necessary but for a longer time. The sterilizing effect of the drugs eliminates remaining bacilli and prevents subsequent relapse.
- Surveillance: The National Health Information and Surveillance Unit monitors the trend of
Tuberculosis in Belize. Passive case finding is based on self-referral of symptomatic individuals who seek treatment at a health care facility. Cases are detected and reported at the District Information Unit where this information is sent to the National Level.

- Contact Tracing: there is a high likelihood that a person with smear-positive pulmonary tuberculosis will transmit tuberculosis. Prompt and thorough contact investigation is essential for the control of this disease. This investigation is implemented by the Public Health Personnel.