

Note: PDFs are available upon request from Dan, email: [dan@jba-cht.com](mailto:dan@jba-cht.com)

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March 25, 2009

Dear Colleague,

April is STD Awareness Month, an annual observance to raise public awareness about the impact of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) on the lives of Americans and the importance of individuals discussing sexual health with their health care providers and, if sexually active, their partners. This letter summarizes CDC's activities and other events that will complement and support your local activities.

#### **STD Awareness Month website**

CDC's [STD Awareness Month website](#) is being updated for 2009 and will provide our STD prevention partners with information and tools to support your local STD Awareness Month activities. Please visit the site and provide us with links to your activities so we can include the links on the site and make the information available to all.

#### **National Collegiate Contest**

To connect with young adults, CDC created the Collegiate STD Awareness Month Campaign Contest. Student teams from participating HBCUs and HSIs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic-Serving Institutions) are developing STD awareness campaigns that employ new media and innovative approaches to reach 18-25 year olds on their campuses and in the surrounding communities. Winners will be announced in April on the STD Awareness Month website, and CDC will work with the winning team to implement the communication campaign. We very much appreciate the support and assistance our state and local STD prevention program partners provided to the student teams in your communities.

#### **National HIV and STD Testing Resources**

Last year, CDC added STD testing locations to the National HIV and STD Testing Resource website. This year, we're making additional enhancements, including a new URL specific to STD testing ([www.findSTDtest.org](http://www.findSTDtest.org)) that will go live on April 1. A widget is being developed to allow you to embed the findSTDtest search box on your website; you'll be able to do this from the [STD Awareness Month website](#) site after April 1. If you have not already done so, please go to [the website](#) and be sure your clinic(s) are included in the data base and that the information about them is current. Since the findSTDtest.org website will be promoted throughout April as a source for STD testing locations, we want to ensure that the information is accurate. Please contact Rachel Kachur ([rlk4@cdc.gov](mailto:rlk4@cdc.gov)) if you need assistance updating your information.

#### **New National Campaign**

To support National STD Awareness Month, throughout April, MTV and the Kaiser Family Foundation are working with Planned Parenthood Federation of America and other partners to inform young people about STDs and promote testing and treatment as needed. The national campaign is part of *It's Your (Sex) Life*, an ongoing public information partnership of MTV and the Kaiser Family Foundation to help young people make responsible decisions about their sexual health. Through a wide-range of on-air, online and mobile components, the campaign seeks to generate buzz and help remove stigma around STDs and testing. Celebrity spokespersons, sweepstakes, and links to nearby STD testing centers will encourage young people to learn more

about STD testing. Visit the [STD Awareness Month](#) website after 8 PM April 1, to learn more about this new campaign.

CDC is providing technical assistance to the campaign to ensure the accuracy of health information. In addition to becoming familiar with the campaign resources and using them, if appropriate, in your community, please reach out during April to health care providers in your area to make them aware of the national campaign. The campaign will provide an excellent platform for you to remind providers about the importance of talking with patients – especially those under the age of 25 – about their sexual health and STD testing that is appropriate for them. Given the expected reach of this campaign with young adults across the country, the population of clients requesting STD information or testing during the month of April may increase. You should also be aware that for many of the clients this may be their first experience with STD testing. In order to provide clients with positive testing experiences, protocols and procedures may need to be adapted in some clinic settings.

### **STD Prevention Materials**

The following materials are available to you without charge:

- STD “The Facts” brochure series. This award-winning series of 10 brochures was developed for the general public and uses plain language. They are available to health departments and other partners to be ordered in quantities up to 500 per brochure at CDC’s [online ordering page](#).
- *A Guide To Taking A Sexual Health History*. This is a practical guide for health care providers and would be a good resource to share with health care providers in your community, especially if you are making them aware of STD Awareness Month activities. These are also available to be [ordered online](#).
- CDC STD Fact Sheets. These are available for [download](#) and local printing and are designed to work in either black and white or color. Downloadable professional print files are also available if you want to print large quantities of these at a local printer.
- Each of DSTDP’s 65 project areas and IPP Regional Coordinators will receive the following campaign materials on April 1:
  - Clinic Kits with promotional materials for clinics to use and distribute during April
  - Campaign posters that can be used in a variety of clinic and non-clinic locations
- Electronic campaign materials are available for download beginning April 1, at [www.GYT09.org](http://www.GYT09.org).

These national efforts are meant to provide support, visibility and context for state and local awareness activities – the key services and outreach that make real impact in your communities. We look forward to your feedback and to working with you as we try to increase both national and local visibility for STD prevention and promotion of sexual health.

Sincerely,

/John M. Douglas, Jr./

John M. Douglas, Jr., MD  
Director, Division of STD Prevention  
National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention

**Program and Training Branch (PTB) Thursday Report**  
**Monthly Highlights from the STD Programs**  
**February 2009**

**NEW YORK CITY**

New York City's Bureau of Sexually Transmitted Disease Control (BSTDC) has implemented a Venereally Important Persons (VIP) program. The VIP program is a multi-pronged effort to specifically address patients most likely to acquire or spread disease.

The patients targeted for the program are

- two or more gonorrhea (GC) episodes (one month or more apart) over a one-year period, or
- a single new case of primary or secondary syphilis (P&S), or
- HIV infection and either new GC or new P&S syphilis infection, or
- HIV positive and any patient with six or more partners in the past three months, or
- HIV positive and any patient reporting exchange of sex for drugs or money

The intent is to prevent disease transmission by structured behavioral interviews designed to promote behavior change (e.g., limiting partner number, condom use), and by re-examining these patients at least every six months so that new infections can be treated and disease spread halted.

Operationally this effort includes

- Identifying the subset of patients who meet one of the criteria.
- Assessing the current sexual and other behaviors of this subset via a questionnaire at each visit.
- Advising patients about changing behavior by carefully gauging patient readiness to change and by encouraging positive change at each visit.
- Having patients return every six months for a total of three visits to obtain expedited access to STD evaluation and assessment of change since their last visit.

Progress to date

- The Electronic Medical Record has been programmed to alert the registration clerk of persons meeting the criteria via an orange flag on the registration page.
- Clinic-by-clinic training of all clinic staff members is in the process of being completed.
- Training of the Public Health Advisory staff is ongoing. A three-day training on enhanced interview skills for the most pivotal staff, and several one-day trainings in motivational interviewing for up to 75 other staff members has been scheduled for March and April 2009.
- Patients who meet at least one of the VIP criteria will receive 'VIP Cards' in the mail which entitles them to expedited access to services during the 18 month period.
- To date, 49 BSTDC clinic patients have been flagged as VIP. Of these, seven have chosen to participate in the VIP program and one refused to participate. Over time the Bureau will be able to monitor changes in sexual and related behaviors, and, hopefully decreased rates of new infection.

**Contact:** Susan Arrowsmith, [SLA2@cdc.gov](mailto:SLA2@cdc.gov)

## **PENNSYLVANIA**

The Pennsylvania (PA) STD Program, in collaboration with the Family Planning Council and the Crozer Chester Medical Center Department, has established a Health Resource Center (HRC) at the Chester Upland School in Chester, Pennsylvania. The HRC was part of the STD Program's overall response to a significant increase in reported gonorrhea in that county. Specifically, in calendar year (CY) 2007, Delaware County reported an 80% increase in gonorrhea over the 513 cases reported in CY 2006: 921 cases were reported in CY 2007. The majority of the increase was concentrated in just eight census tracts in the southern part of the county and, in particular, the city of Chester. As a result of the increases in reported gonorrhea, the city of Chester has reported a gonorrhea case rate of 1,250 cases per 100,000 inhabitants, a rate twelve times higher than the state case rate of 102 cases per 100,000 inhabitants and approximately ten times higher than the national case rate of 121 cases per 100,000 persons. Data from this report were shared with community leaders, which resulted in a number of targeted interventions, including community-wide health screenings, press releases, expanded STD clinical services, and a focus on offering young adults expanded STD testing opportunities. As a result of several community meetings, the Chester-Upland High School was identified as key focal point for expanded STD services. After conducting a thorough review of the various high school screening models, the PA STD Program concluded that the HRC model was the most cost-effective model for establishing a long-term screening program at the high school. The model, based on a similar program in Philadelphia, will provide students seeking care with in-house STD counseling, referrals, and urine-based chlamydia and gonorrhea screening. Any student testing positive will be referred to the Crozer Chester Medical Center for treatment. The Chester-Upland HRC opened on February 2, 2009, and is currently providing services four times a week.

**Contact:** Susan Arrowsmith, [SLA2@cdc.gov](mailto:SLA2@cdc.gov)

## **SAN FRANCISCO**

1. In response to the 55% increase in early syphilis in San Francisco in 2008, the STD Section has re-launched the Healthy Penis Campaign. This highly effective campaign originated in San Francisco in 2002 to encourage Men Who Have Sex With Men (MSM) to get tested for syphilis. The healthy penis appeared on t-shirts, in a series of cartoon print ads, as novelty items, and as a 6-foot tall costume worn by staff members in parades and other community events. After three years in San Francisco and a measured decline in syphilis, the campaign was retired and moved on to other cities.
2. On February 5, 2009, a feature article in the Bay Area Reporter, the largest gay publication in the City, titled, "SF saw dramatic syphilis rise in '08," <http://www.ebar.com/news/article.php?sec=news&article=3695> described how cases had increased significantly in 2008 after a three-year decline and how the number of cases was related to the more than \$450,000 decrease in CDC syphilis elimination funding for San Francisco in 2008. Quotes from Dr. Gail Bolan, the state of California's STD Director, indicated that the state has not seen corresponding increases in the counties surrounding San Francisco.

3. Due to the City's budget deficit, the STD Section has had to reduce its budget by 12.5% (\$450,000). To meet this target, up to five staff members will be laid off effective May 1, 2009. As a contingency, the STD Section will also have to reduce its budget by another 12.5%. That is in addition to a \$145,000 mid-year cut. Total city STD Section budget reductions might exceed \$1,000,000 in 2009.

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