



February 15, 2008

Dear Colleague,

This third annual Dear Colleague letter highlights key activities from 2007 involving the Division of STD Prevention (DSTDP) and our colleagues in the field of STD prevention. With these summaries, we take stock of the work we have accomplished together during the past year and look forward to emerging issues and activities for 2008 focus.

CDC Context

As one of five divisions within the National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention (NCHHSTP), we align our work with the NCHHSTP leadership priorities:

- **Reducing Health Disparities.** Bringing together our best science and programs to reduce variations in incidence rates across population subgroups disproportionately affected by our diseases.
- **Program Collaboration and Service Integration.** Improving collaboration across NCHHSTP's domestic programs to maximize opportunities for health protection and to ensure that our prevention services are optimally integrated and holistic for our clients at the point of access.
- **Maximizing Global Synergies.** Ensuring collaboration across our global programs and research activities in order to take full advantage of opportunities to advance the prevention of HIV, STD, TB and viral hepatitis through integrated approaches. This involves leveraging our strengths, competencies, and capacities to accelerate health protection globally.

DSTDP Priority Domains and Activities

Within the CDC/NCHHSTP context, in 2007 DSTDP worked on the four high priority domains identified in 2006 and discussed in the 2006 Year End Dear Colleague letter <http://www.cdc.gov/std/DearColleagueAct2006-2-6-2007.pdf> :

- **Increasing chlamydia screening** activities include:
 - Continued collaboration with the Partnership for Prevention, focusing on three main activities:
 - Developing a White Paper that examines the evidence supporting CT screening and other recommended adolescent preventive health services
 - Developing a CT screening implementation guide to assist providers in adhering to CT screening recommendations
 - Convening a National Chlamydia Coalition, with planning underway for the first meeting in late May 2008
 - Collaboration with Emory University and the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) to evaluate strategies used by health plans to improve chlamydia screening, with report to be published on the NCQA website in 2008.
 - Ongoing recruitment of a National Chlamydia Screening Coordinator to focus on implementing a national effort to increase chlamydia screening among at-risk populations in the U.S.
 - Release of the **Male Screening Consultation Report** that provides guidance for programs already providing screening for women who want to include targeted screening of men. <http://www.cdc.gov/std/chlamydia/ChlamydiaScreening-males.pdf>.
- **HPV vaccine impact monitoring** activities include:
 - Monitoring cervical precancerous lesions by establishing a network of geographically diverse sentinel sites in collaboration with the Emerging Infections Program, the National Program of Cancer Registries, and the Vaccine Safety Datalink network
 - Monitoring changes in anogenital warts through a network of STD clinics and by analyzing administrative data sets
 - Monitoring HPV infection prevalence through NHANES
 - Evaluating behavioral impact of the HPV vaccine (e.g., Pap testing and sexual behavior) among young adult women and mothers of daughters in the recommended age groups

- **Improving capacity to analyze and use data** for STD program improvement activities include:
 - Issuing guidance for *Evidence-based Action Planning* for syphilis elimination <http://www.cdc.gov/stopsyphilis/SEEEvidence-basedGuidance.pdf>
 - Releasing *Practical Use of Program Evaluation*, a package of 16 tools to build program evaluation capacity in the field <http://www.cdc.gov/std/Program/pupestd.htm>
 - Releasing a new STD Morbidity Report based on the new integrated STD/HIV Interview Record Form, the first major modification since 1997 <http://www.cdc.gov/std/Program/forms/DearColleagueInterviewRecord6-27-2007.pdf>
- Commissioning an organizational assessment to **enhance human capital** in CDC's STD prevention workforce. Conducted by the Office of Personnel Management, the assessment will be completed in spring 2008 and includes extensive headquarters and field staff involvement in focus groups, interviews and surveys to identify key actions for improvement.

DSTDP Leadership

Leadership changes during 2007 include:

- Charlotte Kent - named Chief of the Health Services Research and Evaluation Branch (HSREB)
- Kathryn Koski - named HSREB Deputy Branch Chief
- Jo Valentine - named Acting Disparities Coordinator (still serving as National SEE Coordinator)
- Greg Pierce - named Deputy Branch Chief of the Statistics and Data Management Branch (SDMB)
- David Novak - named Syphilis Elimination Program Coordinator in the Program and Training Branch (PTB)

Consultations

Consultations provided DSTDP the opportunity to engage with external colleagues on a number of important STD prevention topics:

- The **Performance Measure Consultation Meeting** (February and November) assessed the feasibility of implementing and made recommendations regarding new performance measures.
- A **Consultation on Neonatal Herpes Surveillance** (March), held in collaboration with Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE), developed a candidate case-definition of neonatal herpes for consideration by CSTE, examined the need for neonatal herpes surveillance, and recommended that the condition be reportable.
- A **Consultation on the 2009 Comprehensive STD Prevention Systems (CSPS)** (April) solicited input on the development of the 2009 CSPS Competitive Funding Opportunity Announcement.
- A **Consultation to Address STD Disparities in African-American Communities** (June) reviewed the causes of disparities and began to develop new strategies to address this pervasive problem. <http://www.cdc.gov/std/general/STDHealthDisparitiesConsultationJune2007.pdf>
- Three important WHO consultations:
 - **Congenital Syphilis Elimination Initiative Technical Consultation** (July) developed a Statement of Commitment to Saving Newborn Lives and Improving Family Health through the Elimination of Congenital Syphilis, with the initiative publicly launched in October.
 - **STD Diagnostics Initiative Consultation** (December) developed a consensus on the design of country projects and a strategic plan for the development of mathematical models to estimate potential impact and cost-effectiveness of rapid point-of-care tests.
 - **Congenital Syphilis Elimination Investment Case Consultation** (December) developed an outline of an investment rationale directed toward ministries of health, potential donors and partner agencies. A first draft of the investment case document is anticipated summer 2008.
- NCHHSTP's **External Consultation on Program Collaboration and Service Integration (PCSI)** (August) engaged key internal and external stakeholders in developing and refining the vision and objectives for PCSI and planning and prioritizing PCSI activities over the next five years. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/programintegration/Default.htm>.
- An **External Peer Review of DSTDP Research** (October) assessed the focus and public health impact of the Division's current research efforts, identified existing gaps and provided recommendations to improve the focus and quality of the DSTDP research portfolio, with a final report in early 2008.

New Tools

New tools to enhance STD prevention program delivery were developed or released in 2007:

- New **health communication materials** were developed for use by a variety of audiences including:
 - A series of STD-specific brochures, available for print order or download and local printing <http://www.cdc.gov/std/HealthComm/the-facts.htm>
 - New HPV materials for the general public, clinicians and patients, including a fact sheet on HPV and men and a new clinician brochure in English and Spanish <http://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/default.htm>
 - The **Internet Guidelines for Online STD Prevention and Communication**, produced by our partner National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSDD), outlines promising practices for using the Internet for STD prevention and provides guidance for developing Internet-based programs for partner notification, outreach and health communication. http://www.ncsddc.org/upload/wysiwyg/documents/InternetGuidelinesFC9_27_07.pdf
- The **2006 STD Surveillance Report** was released in November. Electronic copies are available at <http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats/default.htm>, and slide sets at <http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats/slides.htm>.
- **STD Trends** summarizes 2006 national data and provides an overview of 2006 trends in each of the reportable STDs. <http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats/trends2006.htm>.
- To assist STD prevention programs with **implementation of EPT**, DSTDP developed materials in collaboration with partner Council of State Governments. <http://www.healthystates.csg.org/>
- **The Internet and STD Technology Center of Excellence** launched a website to enhance communication among people working in STD/HIV prevention. The Internet and STD Center of Excellence is a CDC-funded research effort to identify, implement and evaluate innovative technologies and applications showing promise for STD prevention. www.stdpreventiononline.org
- The **NCHHSTP Health Disparities Report: Health Disparities in HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Tuberculosis in the US: Issues, Burden and Response**, a retrospective review of CDC surveillance data for HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis, STDs, and TB from 2000 to 2004 <http://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/healthdisparities/docs/NCHHSTPHealthDisparitiesReport1107.pdf>

Scientific and Program Development

Important scientific and program developments during the past year include:

- The **Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) HPV Vaccine Workgroup** published recommendations for use of the quadrivalent HPV vaccine. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5602a1.htm>
- **Behavioral Interventions for Prevention and Control of Sexually Transmitted Diseases** was published, a comprehensive review of the current literature in behavioral interventions for STDs. <http://www.springer.com/public+health/book/978-0-387-47863-0>
- A **special issue of Clinical Infectious Diseases** was published, providing background documents, tables of evidence, and rationale for recommendations included in the 2006 STD Treatment Guidelines. <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/toc/cid/44/s3>
- An **updated STD*MIS Version** provides support for reporting of the new morbidity record content for those STD program directors and project officers using STD*MIS software.
- Based on data from GISP, CDC **revised its treatment guidelines**, and no longer recommends the use of fluoroquinolones for the treatment of gonococcal infections and associated conditions such as pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). <http://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/2006/updated-regimens.htm>
- A new **Syphilis Elimination funding formula** directs funds to areas with the highest morbidity to be more responsive to the evolving syphilis epidemic, wide variation in project area funding, and overall funding. <http://www.cdc.gov/stopsyphilis/DearColleagueSEE-Funding-6-21-2007.pdf>
- DSTDP staff continued **collaborations with other nations, the World Health Organization (WHO), and other international partners** in priority areas such as:
 - Development and evaluation of rapid point-of-care tests for STD and evaluation of the use of automated nucleic acid extraction techniques compared to manual procedures
 - Surveillance of newly-emerging STDs, including highly-resistant gonorrhea and LGV strains
 - Elimination of congenital syphilis as a public health problem
 - Development and dissemination of *Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Sexually Transmitted Infections: 2006-2015* <http://www.who.int/reproductive-health/stis/docs/stiskeymsgs.pdf>

- Impact of episodic acyclovir therapy on ulcer duration and HIV shedding from genital ulcers among men in South Africa
- Participation on the WHO HPV Expert Advisory Group and WHO/Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on vaccines

Looking Forward

Several activities for 2008 are already well underway, including:

- **Integrated Partner Services Guidelines** will be released in June and will have implications for both STD and HIV prevention programs. The Prevention Training Centers (PTC) will conduct an assessment of programs' ability to implement the guidelines, identify strategies to enhance implementation and provide technical assistance and training.
- A new **STD Program Management** curriculum is being developed by the Partner Services and Program support STD/HIV PTCs (Part 3s), to be piloted in late 2008.
- A meeting of **Chlamydia Immunology** experts will be held in April 2008 to address the natural history and immune response to *Chlamydia trachomatis* to inform chlamydia control programs.
- As follow-up to the June 2007 consultation, an **action plan for addressing health disparities** will be finalized and implementation will begin in the second quarter of 2008.
- A new **CSPS Announcement** will be released with an emphasis on priorities such as increasing chlamydia screening, partner services, use of local evidence to target syphilis elimination efforts, program collaboration/service integration and improved monitoring and evaluation.
- To provide a resource for local STD programs to raise public awareness about STD health issues, DSTDP and program partners are developing a website to serve as a platform for **STD Awareness Month** activities, an online contest to develop STD awareness content, and expansion of the hivtest.org site to include STD screening and testing guidance and locations.
- Licensure of a **second HPV vaccine** in 2008 will raise such issues as recommendations for a new bivalent vaccine (16, 18) versus current vaccine (16, 18, 6, 11) and whether the vaccines can be used interchangeably (for protection against HPV 16/18).
- Important **laboratory topics** will be addressed to support STD prevention efforts:
 - Revised guidelines for laboratory diagnosis of gonorrhea, chlamydia and syphilis will be developed.
 - Prevalence monitoring projects and special studies to enhance STD surveillance at a national level will allow us to focus on specific populations as well as detect emerging issues such as increases in LGV and planning for early detection and control of spread of resistant gonorrhea strains.
 - We will conduct in-house evaluations and field trials of two new point-of-care diagnostic tests that can detect both treponemal and non-treponemal antibodies and therefore provide a better indication of active syphilis.

National STD Prevention Conference

The 2008 National STD Prevention Conference, *Confronting Challenges, Applying Solutions*, provides us an opportunity to engage in extended dialogue about the complex issues facing STD prevention in the U.S. Our invited keynote speakers will provide a variety of perspectives to challenge our traditional thinking about STDs and their impact on society. The scientific program offers a wide range of important presentations, with rich opportunity for discussion and debate. I look forward to seeing you in Chicago, Illinois, March 10 – 13.

Entering five years into my tenure as Director of DSTDP, each day I find some new reason to feel proud of the work we do together and impressed by the intelligence, compassion and insight of dedicated colleagues across the country. Together, we make a difference in the lives of many. I wish us all further successes in 2008 as we address our common challenges to improve population health.

Sincerely,



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