



January 28, 2009

Dear Colleague,

This annual Dear Colleague letter highlights 2008 activities involving the Division of STD Prevention (DSTDP) and our external STD prevention colleagues and looks forward to issues and activities to be addressed in 2009. Many of you have told us that these summaries are useful, and we invite your continued comment to ensure they remain helpful to your work.

DSTDP Strategic Planning and Priority Activities

Building on earlier strategic plans and on division priorities from 2006 and 2007, DSTDP completed its [five-year Strategic Plan](#) in 2008. The plan is being used to guide DSTDP's decision making, human and financial resource allocation, and programmatic direction. DSTDP will focus on three of the seven goals for high priority activities in 2009:

- Prevent STI-related infertility
- Reduce STI-related health disparities across and within communities and populations
- Strengthen STD prevention capacity and infrastructure

Work also continued in the four priority domains identified in 2006. Highlights of 2008 progress in these domains include:

- **Increasing chlamydia screening** activities include:
 - Continued collaboration with the [Partnership for Prevention](#), focusing on three main activities:
 - A White Paper examining the evidence supporting Chlamydia screening and other recommended adolescent preventive health services, with publication expected in late 2009.
 - Finalizing a Chlamydia screening implementation guide to assist providers in adhering to Chlamydia screening recommendations, with dissemination expected in late spring 2009.
 - Launching the National Chlamydia Coalition in June of 2008. This partnership of over 40 national organizations will work to increase public awareness of Chlamydia screening and to identify and address provider and policy-level barriers to widespread adherence to screening guidance.
 - Supporting Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) as a useful option to facilitate partner management:
 - In August 2008, the American Bar Association [passed a resolution](#) supporting the removal of legal barriers to EPT.
 - Six additional states took action to permit EPT, with details published on the [CDC EPT web pages](#).
 - Collaboration with other federal agencies to enhance STD prevention and Chlamydia screening in other federally supported health systems.
- **HPV vaccine impact monitoring** activities include continuing to monitor cervical precancerous lesions through 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; and by analyzing administrative data sets, as well as monitoring changes in anogenital warts, HPV infection prevalence and behavioral impact of the HPV vaccine.
- **Improving capacity to analyze and use data** for STD program improvement include:
 - [STD Data Management and Information Technology web pages](#) were developed to catalogue STD-relevant information system resources developed by local programs and CDC and to characterize functional requirements.
 - [STD*MIS version 4.1](#) was released in January 2008. This significant upgrade supports the newly expanded national case reporting requirements that went into effect in 2008.
 - Site visits by the DSTDP Performance Measures (PM) Workgroup to better understand how programs use PM to improve performance and to identify successes and challenges that can be shared.
 - Evidence-based Action Plans (EBAPs) are now being used by Syphilis Elimination grantees as a strategy to assist in the planning and management of syphilis prevention and control programs.
 - Developed Sexually Transmitted Infection Cost Figure (STIC), a spreadsheet-based program to estimate both the medical and indirect costs saved by STD prevention program activities. To obtain a STIC spreadsheet and instruction manual, contact Dayne Collins (DCollins@cdc.gov).

- **Enhancing human capital** activities include:
 - Completion of DSTDP organizational assessment and establishment of Action Planning team to prioritize implementation of recommendations from the assessment.
 - Development of DSTDP mentoring program to be piloted in early 2009.

DSTDP Leadership and Awards

Leadership changes and awards received during 2008 include:

- Janice Norwood was named Deputy Chief of the Program and Training Branch (PTB).
- Fred Bloom was named Deputy Associate Director of Science in the Office of the Director (OD).
- Raul Romaguera was named National Chlamydia Screening Coordinator (OD).
- David Johnson was named STD Disparities Coordinator (OD).
- Several DSTDP staff won **NCHHSTP Director's Recognition Awards**:
 - Melanie Taylor, Lori de Ravello and Scott Tulloch for organizing and leading the international meeting, "Sexually Transmitted Diseases Among Alaska Native and Inuit/First Nations/Métis in Canada: Discovering Opportunities for Collaboration."
 - Kerry Kenney for exemplary leadership coordinating local efforts to train tribal health and IHS staff in STD case management and follow-up.
 - The *Safe in the City* team for development of the *Safe in the City* [intervention video](#).
- The HPV Vaccine Workgroup including Lauri Markowitz, Eileen Dunne, and Stuart Berman, was awarded a **PHS Outstanding Unit Citation** for guiding development of national HPV vaccine recommendations.
- Arnold Castro won the **2008 Award for Excellence in Technology Transfer** for the "Dual Antigen Detection Assay for Syphilis."
- The [STD brochure series](#) won a **MarCom Award** platinum from the Association of Marketing and Communications Professionals and a silver in the **National Health Information Award Competition** sponsored by the Health Information Resource Center. The brochures are available for online order.

Consultations/Meetings

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

- The [2008 National STD Prevention Conference](#) (March) brought together more than 1,300 public health, medical, and academic experts to focus on reducing the burden of STDs in the U.S.
- **Chlamydia Immunology and Control Expert Advisory Meeting** (April) evaluated biological and individual-level evidence about *Chlamydia trachomatis*' natural history, pathogenesis, and immunobiology to determine the relevance of such findings for chlamydia prevention.
- **Students At Risk: HIV/AIDS and STD Epidemic in the African American Community Conference** (May) was held in collaboration the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) to educate African-American school board members about the HIV/AIDS and STD epidemic among the African American population and to develop a work plan to raise awareness about these issues.
- A [roundtable discussion](#) (June) with the colleagues from the Department of Defense explored potential collaboration with CDC in STD prevention.
- The **National Chlamydia Coalition (NCC)** held inaugural (June) and follow-up (November) meetings to map out collaborative strategies for reducing Chlamydia among adolescents and young adults.
- WHO and DSTDP co-sponsored a **Consultation on an Investment Case for the Global Elimination of Congenital Syphilis** (June) involving global partners from governments, NGOs, academic institutions, and foundations.
- A **National Symposium on Infertility as a Public Health Issue** (September) was held in collaboration with the Division of Reproductive Health to begin development of a National Public Health Plan for the Prevention, Detection and Management of Infertility.

New Tools

New tools to enhance STD prevention program delivery were developed or released in 2008:

- **Health communication materials** were developed for use by a variety of audiences including:
 - An updated condom [Fact Sheet for Public Health Professionals](#) and [Fact Sheet in Brief](#) for the general public were published in December.

- [Making Sense of Your Pap and HPV Results](#), a patient brochure, was published in English and Spanish, adding to the ongoing HPV educational campaign materials.
- STD e-cards were developed to raise awareness about STDs and to encourage testing.
- The [HIVtest.org](#) website was expanded to include STD testing guidance and locations.
- The **2007 STD Surveillance Report** was published in hard copy and [electronic](#) formats. [Slide sets](#) and the [STD Trends](#) summary reports are also available.
- **The Internet and STD Technology Center of Excellence** launched [STD Prevention Online](#), a networking site to enhance communication among people working in STD/HIV prevention.
- The [2006 NCHHSTP Disease Profile](#) includes a review of HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis, STD, and TB surveillance data, with a special focus on African-American men to illustrate how these diseases and the factors that influence them may overlap and result in excess disease burden among certain populations.
- [Safe in the City](#), a 23-minute HIV/STD prevention video designed for STD clinics, can be easily integrated into the clinic waiting room, requires very little staff time to set up with no disruption to clinic flow, and requires no counseling or small-group facilitation.
- American Social Health Association (ASHA) examined [state-level funding for STD prevention](#) and presents the results and policy implications in a number of easily-accessible profiles on its website.

Scientific and Program Development

Important scientific and program developments during the past year include:

- Several *MMWRs and a special journal issue* were released:
 - [Recommendations for Partner Services Programs for HIV Infection, Syphilis, Gonorrhea, and Chlamydial Infection](#) (November, MMWR).
 - [Syphilis Testing Algorithms Using Treponemal Tests for Initial Screening - Four Laboratories, New York City, 2005 - 2006](#) (August, MMWR).
 - [Availability of Cefixime 400 mg Tablets - United States](#) (April, MMWR).
 - A special issue of *Sexually Transmitted Infections* (October) focused on the importance of addressing efficacy, effectiveness and population impact as critical elements of STD prevention. Free access to this journal is available through [STDPreventionOnline.org](#).
 - A [special issue](#) of *Sexually Transmitted Infections* (November) published background papers from CDC's 2007 consultation on male Chlamydia screening.
 - A [special issue](#) of *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* (December) published the background papers from the 2007 Consultation to Address STD Disparities in African American Communities.
- All 65 project areas were funded under new, five-year **CSPS Cooperative Agreements**, emphasizing priorities such as increasing Chlamydia screening; partner services; use of local evidence to target syphilis elimination efforts; program collaboration/service integration; improved monitoring and evaluation; and responding to health disparities.
- The **STD Surveillance Network (SSuN)** was expanded from 6 to 12 sites funded for five years and establishes a robust surveillance platform with a broad, flexible capacity for a wide variety of STD clinic and population-based surveillance activities, including the MSM Prevalence Monitoring Project.
- For the **Healthy People 2010 Progress Review**, in August, DSTDP reported on progress toward achieving the Healthy People 2010 [STD goals and objectives](#).
- DSTDP staff **continued collaborations with other nations, WHO, and other international partners** in priority areas such as:
 - WHO Global Initiative for the Elimination of Congenital Syphilis as a Public Health Problem.
 - WHO/CDC partnership to enhance gonorrhea antimicrobial susceptibility surveillance in the Western Pacific and Southeast Asia regions to enhance early detection of global emergence of cephalosporin-resistant gonorrhea.
 - Continuing to act as the reference laboratory for WHO's STD Diagnostics Initiative and as WHO Collaborating Center for Reference and Research in Syphilis Serology.

Looking Forward 2009

Several activities for 2009 are already well underway, including:

- To support STD surveillance, **STD*MIS 5.0** will be released in 2009; a [pre-release version of STD*MIS 5.0](#) is now available for download and review.

- To address preparedness for the emergence of antibiotic resistant gonorrhea, a plan to ***contain or limit the spread of cephalosporin resistant gonorrhea*** will be developed, including state and local level action plans as well as enhanced surveillance in the Western Pacific (e.g., Hawaii and Guam).
- To provide a resource for local STD programs to raise public awareness about STD health issues, DSTDP and program partners are developing activities for ***STD Awareness Month*** (April):
 - A partnership among CDC, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Kaiser Family Foundation and MTV will launch a national STD awareness campaign during April intended to continue and provide an umbrella for development of specific STD prevention activities at the national and state levels.
 - An STD Awareness Campaign Contest will allow participating college teams to create a new media campaign plan to increase awareness of STDs among 18- to 25-year-olds.
- Requests before FDA for licensure of a ***second, bivalent HPV vaccine*** and licensure of existing quadrivalent vaccine for use in men will require developing or modifying CDC HPV vaccine recommendations.
- Consultations on important topics will be convened:
 - A consultation to develop recommendations for ***laboratory diagnosis*** of Chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis was held in early January 2009, with publication of laboratory guidelines expected in early 2010.
 - A ***Public Health and Corrections Consultation*** (March 2009) will analyze operational, legal and budgetary issues associated with correctional facility prevention activities to inform the development of toolkits and guidance documents.
 - An ***STD Treatment Guidelines Consultation*** (April 2009) will begin the process of developing the 2010 STD Treatment Guidelines.
 - ***The Consortium of African American Public Health (CAAPHP)*** will host a national conference during 2009 at Tuskegee University to educate Historically Black College and University (HBCU) faculty, staff, students and surrounding communities on STD prevention.
- Reports and special journal issues forthcoming in 2009 include:
 - A special issue of *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* focused on ***STD control in correctional settings*** will be published in February 2009 ([e-publish ahead of print available now](#)).
 - A meeting summary and a special issue of *The Journal of Infectious Diseases* will be published as a result of the ***Chlamydia Immunology and Control*** Expert Advisory Meeting held in April 2008.
 - A supplemental issue in *Public Health Reports* in 2009 is dedicated to the description of various OASIS-related activities to ***improve the surveillance of STDs***.
 - Using information from 12 jails site visits in 2008, a “green” paper will outline the barriers, facilitators, and potential strategies for Chlamydia and gonorrhea screening in jails. The information will be used to implement pilot projects in jails interested in expanding screening.

As we complete this look-back at 2008, we are in the midst of planning for use of funds that may come to STD prevention through the American Economic Recovery and Investment Plan. As this economic stimulus program moves forward, we will look to you, our partners, to help us develop the most strategic uses of these funds for maximum benefit for STD prevention and public health. We at CDC are tremendously encouraged by the opportunities for positive change that lie before us as a result of both this initiative and the vision of our new leadership. I can think of no group of colleagues better prepared than STD prevention professionals across the nation to embrace changes that can help us serve those who need us most.

Sincerely,

/John M. Douglas, Jr., MD/

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