Dear Colleague,

April marks the annual observance of STD Awareness Month. This month is an opportunity to bring a renewed sense of enthusiasm and focus to STD awareness and prevention efforts. This is particularly important in light of the significant increases in STDs in California over the past six years.

Rather than developing a single-themed campaign this year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is updating four of their most popular campaigns to allow local health jurisdictions and other stakeholders to customize STD Awareness Month outreach to local needs and audiences.

CDC plans to release these updated campaign resources as well as a communications toolkit on March 19th, but has shared the campaign themes and target audiences to assist stakeholders in planning their outreach. The updated campaigns include:

- **Treat Me Right** – a campaign focusing on the patient-provider relationship which is directed towards healthcare providers and patients;
- **Syphilis Strikes Back** – a campaign focusing on the resurgence of syphilis across the nation which is designed to reach gay and bisexual men, pregnant women and newborn babies, and healthcare providers;
- **Talk Test Treat** – a campaign which encourages three simple actions to address the rising rates of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis; it aims to reach individuals and healthcare providers;
- **Get Yourself Tested (GYT)** – a campaign which encourages youth ages 15-24 years old to get tested and treated for STDs.

When these materials become available, you will be able to find them on the [CDC STD Awareness Month webpage](https://www.cdc.gov/std/awarenessmonth).
To help with your STD Awareness Month promotional efforts, we are providing a list of additional resources that may be useful when interacting with local media outlets, including existing awareness campaign materials and pre-developed media talking points.

- **STD Awareness Campaign Resources** – CDPH webpage with links to existing national, state, and local STD awareness campaigns and related resources. Many of these campaigns can be customized to connect audiences with local information and resources.

- **STD Awareness Resource Site (CDC NPIN)** – Created by the CDC for STD Awareness Month, this website contains tools and resources for STD prevention, including tips and tools on how to share STD prevention messages with media outlets.

- **Take Charge of Your Sexual Health (NCSH)** – Created by the National Coalition for Sexual Health, this guide for youth and adults provides information about recommended screenings, vaccinations, and counseling.

- **Get Tested (CDC)** – Created by the CDC, this webpage provides an additional list of national campaigns targeting HIV, STD, and Hepatitis Testing.

- **Infographic Resources for STD Prevention** – This CDPH webpage includes a variety of California-specific STD-related infographics for various audiences.

**Youth-Focused Resources:**

- **Yes Means Test! Campaign** – This project was created by the American Sexual Health Association (ASHA) to promote STD testing among youth and young adults. The site offers shareable graphics, a tool for users to find their nearest clinic, and showcases key statistics about young people and STD risk.

- **Condom Access Project (CAP)** – This Essential Access Health project provides free condoms to California teens who need them. Depending on where youth live, they can request a packet of condoms online and/or pick up free condoms at a teen-friendly location nearby. Youth can learn more about CAP at TeenSource.org.

**Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender-Focused Resources:**

- **Building Healthy Online Communities (BHOC)** - resources and information to promote gay men’s sexual health online.
- **What Gay, Bisexual and Other MSM Need to Know About STDs** - CDC fact sheet.
- **LGBT-friendly provider directory (GLMA)**
- **they2ze.org** - digital resource to connect transgender-spectrum youth and providers to inclusive health services.
- **For Men Only: Your Sexual Health** - NCSD patient resource.
HIV Prevention Resources:

- STD Prevention is HIV Prevention (CDC STD Awareness Month Resources)
- HIV/AIDS campaigns (CDC NPIN)
- Ask Me About PrEP campaign by Altamed

Talking Points for STD Awareness Month:

- STDs increased in California in 2017 for the sixth year in a row.
- There are many underlying drivers of STD increases; however there is no simple solution. STD risk is fueled by poverty, homelessness, substance use, the exchange of sex for money/housing/other resources, and other changes in sexual behaviors.
- Syphilis is a major public health problem in California and has increased in all regions of the state, and among both males and females; the number of infants born with congenital syphilis increased for the 5th year in a row.
- Striking disparities exist with STDs in California.
  - African-Americans face a disproportionate burden of STDs compared to other groups, which may reflect unequal access to quality STD care and other intersecting factors.
  - Youth are more likely to get an STD compared to older age groups.
  - Men who have sex with men are more likely to get an STD compared to their heterosexual counterparts.
- STDs can cause serious health problems.
- Many STDs can be prevented with the correct and consistent use of condoms.
- The most common symptom of an STD is no symptom at all. The only way for someone to know they have an STD is to get tested.
- STD prevention is HIV prevention. If someone has an STD, seeing a healthcare provider for proper treatment will reduce their risk of getting HIV.

Data and additional information and resources may be found at std.ca.gov. If you have any questions, please contact Sandee Differding at Sandra.Differding@cdph.ca.gov. If you obtain any press coverage, please share it with us.

Sincerely,

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