



Promoting Sexual Health
Through STD Prevention

NCSDDC.ORG

1029 Vermont Ave NW
Ste 500
Washington, DC 20005

202.842.4660
202.842.4542 (Fax)

August 18, 2022

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
Prevention
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Rochelle Walensky, MD. MPH
Director
Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Secretary Becerra and Dr. Walensky:

On behalf of the National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSDDC), which represents state health departments, seven large cities and U.S. Territories, we are respectfully requesting that as you formulate your fiscal year 2024 budget, increased funding be provided for programs to combat sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and associated infections.

It is estimated that there are nearly 68 million STD infections every year in the U.S., with a financial toll of \$16 billion in direct medical costs. For the sixth consecutive year, U.S. cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis hit an all-time high, with a yearly increase of 2.5 million cases. STDs also disproportionately impact ethnic and racial minority groups, young people, and gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM). STD rates for African Americans are five to eight times that of non-Hispanic white people. MSM account for almost half of all primary and secondary syphilis cases.

The chronic underfunding of STD programs was further exacerbated by COVID-19, with STD contact tracers shifted to combat the spread of the virus. The current monkeypox outbreak is placing a further serious strain on health departments to address multiple public health emergencies without any additional funding. Front-line health professionals are stretched to the limit and struggling to fully execute critical services to prevent the spread of STDs and associated viruses. STD programs can play a major role in testing, screening, and preventing the spread of STDs but only if a significant increase in STD program funding is provided.

Specifically, we are requesting:

- \$344.5 million in Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funding, to combat the high rates of STDs, help rebuild state and local health departments, increase capacity, address understaffing, training, and team management.

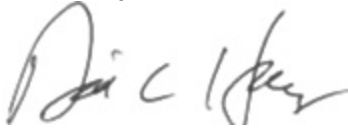
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- \$100 million to promote school-based health and disease prevention at the CDC Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH) to expand access to sexual health services and prevent the spread of HIV, STDs, and pregnancy in adolescent youth.
- Lifting the 10 percent clinical services cap on STD health department grantees

With adequate funding—and making STDs a major public health priority—the US can begin to rebuild our prevention efforts, save billions of dollars in medical costs, and regain control of our STD epidemics.

Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,



David C. Harvey
Executive Director
National Coalition of STD Directors

CC: Shalanda Young, Director, Office of Management and Budget



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