



September 19, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

On October 4 we will celebrate the second *National Disease Intervention Specialist Recognition Day*. The first Friday of October allows us the opportunity to recognize our Nation's Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) who work in communities throughout the United States and the U.S. Territories to protect the public's health. Originally established to work in the field of STD prevention, their ground-level investigative skills have become key components of tuberculosis outbreak response, HIV exposure notification, other infectious disease control, and emergency response efforts. Disease Intervention Specialists remain critical to the foundation of public health service and are widely regarded as the backbone of STD/HIV programs.

DIS receive extensive training on essential investigative skills such as communication, interviewing, and case analysis. Today, as the healthcare landscape evolves, DIS are needed even more to ensure linkage to care through expanded relationships with clinical providers. DIS will need to adapt to become patient navigators and bridge workers, and continue to look for efficient and innovative ways to conduct partner services and high-intensity behavioral counseling.

CDC is committed to ensuring DIS receive the high-quality training necessary to perform effectively in their roles. Over the past year CDC collaborated with the National Association of County and City Health Officials and the National Coalition of STD Directors to better understand the capacity and training needs of the DIS workforce. Through our national partners, CDC has reached out to DIS and their supervisors around the country to collect field-level input on the essential activities and training needs of DIS. The information collected is invaluable and CDC will utilize these data to inform training and programmatic guidelines related to DIS and the provision of partner services efforts.

Once again on this special day, we applaud our DIS colleagues, working to protect the health of the public by helping to stop the spread of infections, increasing access to medical care, educating the public about disease transmission and risk, and linking medical providers with health departments to prevent and control disease.

Sincerely,

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