



December 18, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to share HHS' [Sexually Transmitted Infections National Strategic Plan for the United States: 2021-2025](#), the nation's first-ever plan of its kind for STIs. It is exciting to see this groundbreaking plan come to life.

#### **STI National Strategic Plan: Vision**

*The United States will be a place where sexually transmitted infections are prevented and where every person has high-quality STI prevention, care, and treatment while living free from stigma and discrimination.*

*This vision includes all people, regardless of age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, geographic location, or socioeconomic circumstance.*

The STI Plan could not come at a better time: STD rates continue their historic climb contributing to myriad adverse health effects, including infant death and increased HIV infections.

STIs are nothing new. The first STD clinics opened more than a century ago and these infections existed long before that. However, they continue to be shrouded in shame, stigma and silence, and many Americans underestimate the risk and impact of these infections and do not proactively seek care or protect themselves. Disparities and health inequities among racial, ethnic and sexual minorities are pervasive, creating additional barriers to obtaining adequate care and treatment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded many of these challenges, exacerbating pre-existing racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare and prevention access, and straining our public health infrastructure.

Despite those challenges, we are hopeful. The STI Plan will provide our nation with a critically needed roadmap to develop and implement programs at the national, state and local levels over the next five years to reverse the course of the STI epidemic. One of its greatest strengths will be achieving the goal of a "whole-of-nation" response: breaking down silos and executing a coordinated and cohesive response. The STI Plan leverages efforts to prevent, detect and control other conditions like HIV, viral hepatitis, and substance use disorders to better prevent, detect and treat STIs. Truly realizing its vision will require each one of us bringing our skills and contributions to the table and engaging in partnership and collaboration.

CDC looks forward to playing a major role in executing this groundbreaking new plan. As the federal agency with the primary responsibility of STD prevention, CDC is committed to bringing our strengths in surveillance, programmatic support, and epidemiological research to bear as we move toward implementation. We also know our work is central to achieving the STI Plan's ambitious vision, along with partnerships and collaborations with others.



The STD field as always been innovative and creative. We dig deep to find new solutions. We adapt quickly to meet the ever-changing landscape of the healthcare system. And we collaborate to share information, strategies, and science.

We invite you to join us on this journey.

Best regards,

Gail Bolan, MD  
Director, Division of STD Prevention  
National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Jonathan H. Mermin, MD, MPH  
RADM and Assistant Surgeon General, USPHS  
Director,  
National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/nchhstp](http://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp)