



July 26, 2016

Dear Colleagues,

I hope this letter finds all of you well, and that you are enjoying your summer. To begin this letter I would like to share with you a short personal story. Recently, I had the great honor of working with several others here at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to grant a “wish” to a young woman as part of the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Shelby Mayo is a 17-year-old from Texas who was diagnosed with a rare nervous system disorder. CDC helped Shelby get one step closer to her dream of working for the CDC as a researcher during her four day visit to our campuses. During her visit, Shelby became an honorary disease detective, met CDC director Dr. Frieden, and visited two CDC laboratories and the Fulton County Health Department. At that time I had the pleasure of meeting with her and, for me, that experience was a poignant reminder of just how inspiring our work in public health truly is. I have no doubt that in her future Shelby will work hard and achieve every goal that she sets for herself.

Thanks to all of you who helped to make Shelby’s wish come true. Now, I would like to take an opportunity to provide you with some project updates and share with you some new resources developed by DSTDP.

Project ECHO LGBT Health: Transforming Primary Care for LGBT

Project ECHO for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) patients is a year-long, national program that goes beyond the scope of disease and complex case care to a more holistic approach, focusing on improving population health and transforming health systems. The National Association of Community Health Centers, the Weitzman Institute, and Fenway Health, with joint support from DSTDP and CDC’s Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention, are partnering to improve LGBT health by expanding the availability of culturally responsible, comprehensive primary care through awareness, education, and knowledge-sharing.

Provider champions from participating health centers hold virtual meetings biweekly with Project ECHO faculty for a presentation and Q&A focused on a single topic, as well as consultation on cases. The clinical consultation is supported by systems change and quality improvement measurements in ten competitively-selected health centers.

Additionally, the project is introducing the practice of reporting core measures, such as sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) of patients, as well as taking comprehensive sexual histories and risk assessments. Later phases of Project ECHO will focus on risk-based measures among men who have sex with men and transgender women, specifically, and how to incorporate best practices into daily care. Project ECHO LGBT ends in March 2017, and we look forward to being able to share the project outcomes with you at that time.

STD Prevention Success Stories

For more than 50 years, CDC has worked with state and local health department programs to prevent the spread of STDs. These programs are critical to STD prevention and control, and ultimately, to protecting the health of communities across the U.S.

Program achievements are not coincidence, but rather a result of CDC’s funding, resources, training, and technical assistance to all states, some territories, and local STD programs, combined with the hard work,

innovation, and collaboration of colleagues in these programs. To help raise awareness about what programs can accomplish, and what a good investment they are, DSTDP developed a series of [STD prevention success stories](#). The narratives range in topic from expedited partner therapy to Disease Intervention Specialists to collaborations. They span the nation, with highlights from Hawaii to New Hampshire, and places in between. I encourage you to read and share these success stories to learn more about the work of your colleagues.

2016 STD Prevention Conference Coming Soon

I am looking forward to welcoming many of you back to Atlanta September 20–23 for [the 2016 STD Prevention Conference](#). The conference is a collaboration between the American Sexual Health Association, the American Sexually Transmitted Diseases Association, CDC, the National Coalition of STD Directors, the Pan American Health Organization, and the Public Health Agency of Canada. The Conference will follow a theme of “Transcending Barriers. Creating Opportunities.” Dr. Sheena McCormack from the University College London will kick off the conference with an opening plenary session titled “PrEPortunity for STD control.” With more than 90 presentations and nearly 300 posters, this year’s conference is gearing up to be an engaging and informative event. The 2016 STD Prevention Conference will also feature a mobile app and several opportunities for social media engagement. Don’t miss out on early bird registration rates—prices go up on August 13!

New Resources

DSTDP, together with its partners, has a number of new resources we hope will help health departments, STD prevention programs, and community-based organizations in their mission to prevent the spread of STDs.

Using Motion Comics to Educate Young People about HIV and STD Prevention

We know young people in the U.S. are significantly affected by HIV and other STDs, and importantly, we also know that reaching them with the effective prevention information they need can be challenging. To promote HIV and STD awareness and prevention among youth, DSTDP staff and colleagues from other parts of CDC developed a motion comic to engage this population. [KABI Chronicles: The Edge](#) is an original, comic-based, serial drama following the lives of nine fictional high school and college friends as they navigate through the joys and struggles of young adulthood. By following the characters in the seven-part series as they experience the highs and lows of schools, dating, sex and friendship, viewers are also being educated about HIV and STDs. Please check out this highly innovative educational tool and share with colleagues!

A Clinician’s Role in Protecting the Health of Gay, Bisexual, and other Men who Have Sex with Men

Clinicians play a critical role in improving the sexual health of gay and bisexual men, a population that continues to be disproportionately impacted by HIV and other STDs. [In this video](#), National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention (NCHHSTP) Director Jono Mermin details the ways that healthcare providers can talk, test, and treat—in accordance with the unique needs of gay and bisexual men—to prevent STDs in this population.

Medscape Expert Commentary on Congenital Syphilis

In DSTDP’s latest [Medscape Expert Commentary](#), CDC Medical Officer Dr. Sarah Kidd summarizes the information that healthcare providers need to know about congenital syphilis, including the latest data trends and the critical steps that providers can take to protect pregnant women and their babies.

STD Preventive Services Gap Assessment Toolkit

The [STD Preventive Services Gap Assessment Toolkit](#) provides STD programs assistance in planning, conducting, and analyzing data from a gap assessment to inform program activities and improve STD prevention. By conducting a gap assessment, an STD program can identify, document, and learn about the

array of STD clinical and other preventive services across a defined geographic area, or for a defined population.

Internet Partner Services Toolkit

Earlier this year, we released the [Internet Partner Services \(IPS\) Toolkit](#). This updated toolkit serves as a general resource for using the Internet and other digital technologies, such as mobile phones and social networking sites, to trace and contact persons potentially exposed to STDs and HIV. It is especially useful for health departments, community-based organizations, and others who provide HIV/STD partner services.

Publications of Interest

I'd like to highlight several articles of interest to researchers and those in the field were published in recent months.

- [The Cost-Effectiveness of Syphilis Screening Among Men Who Have Sex With Men: An Exploratory Modeling Analysis](#). Sex Transm.Dis. 43.7 (2016): 429-32.
- [Willingness to Use Health Insurance at a Sexually Transmitted Disease Clinic: A Survey of Patients at 21 US Clinics](#). Am.J.Public Health. 106.8 (2016): 1511-13.
- [Estimating the Population Sizes of Men Who Have Sex With Men in US States and Counties Using Data From the American Community Survey](#). JMIR.Public Health Surveill 2.1 (2016): e14.
- [Increased gonorrhea screening and case finding after implementation of expanded screening criteria—urban Indian Health Service facility in Phoenix, Arizona, 2011–2013](#). Sex Transm Dis (2016);43:396–401.
- [Infant Deaths Due To Herpes Simplex Virus, Congenital Syphilis, and HIV in New York City](#). Pediatrics 137.4 (2016).
- [A case-control study evaluating the role of Internet meet-up sites and mobile telephone applications in influencing a syphilis outbreak: Multnomah County, Oregon, USA 2014](#). Sex Transm Infect. 92.5 (2016): 353-58.
- [Effectiveness of an adaptation of the Project Connect Health Systems Intervention: youth and clinic-level findings](#). J Sch Health. 86.8 (2016): 595-603.

And finally, I'd like to conclude this letter by saying a special thanks to William "Bill" Smith, who has led the National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSDD) for the past seven years and will be leaving NCSDD in September to become the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Santa Fe Community Foundation. Bill has been a friend to our tight-knit community—he's created partnerships to build on STD prevention, and has worked hard to bring attention to ongoing STD prevention capacity, infrastructure, and funding concerns. Bill has a great deal of passion for populations at-risk and his policy and partnership savvy has helped to expand STD prevention programs and opportunities. Bill will be greatly missed, but I wish him well with his pending endeavors in New Mexico.

Best Regards,

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U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention